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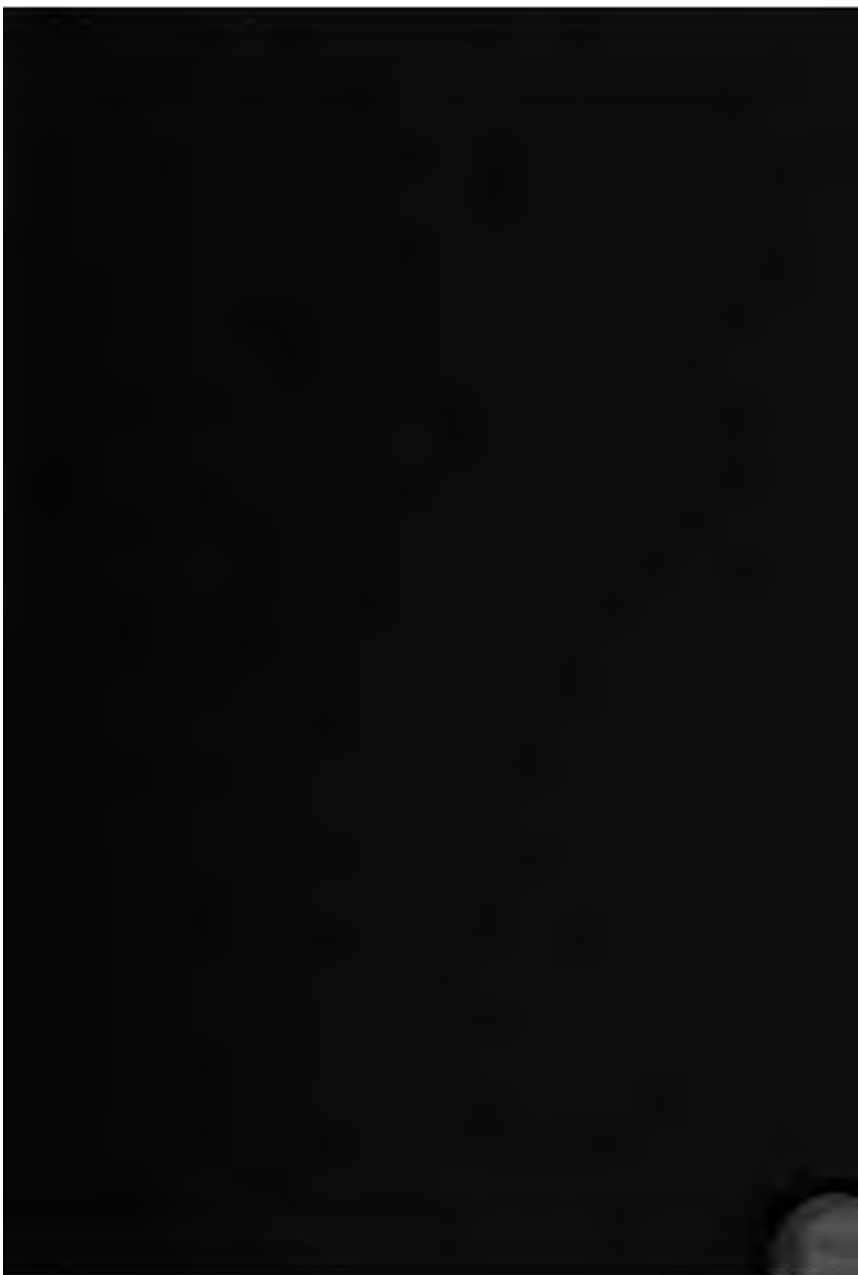
STORIES OF THE
MOUNTAIN AND THE **F**OREST



BY M. A. PAULL



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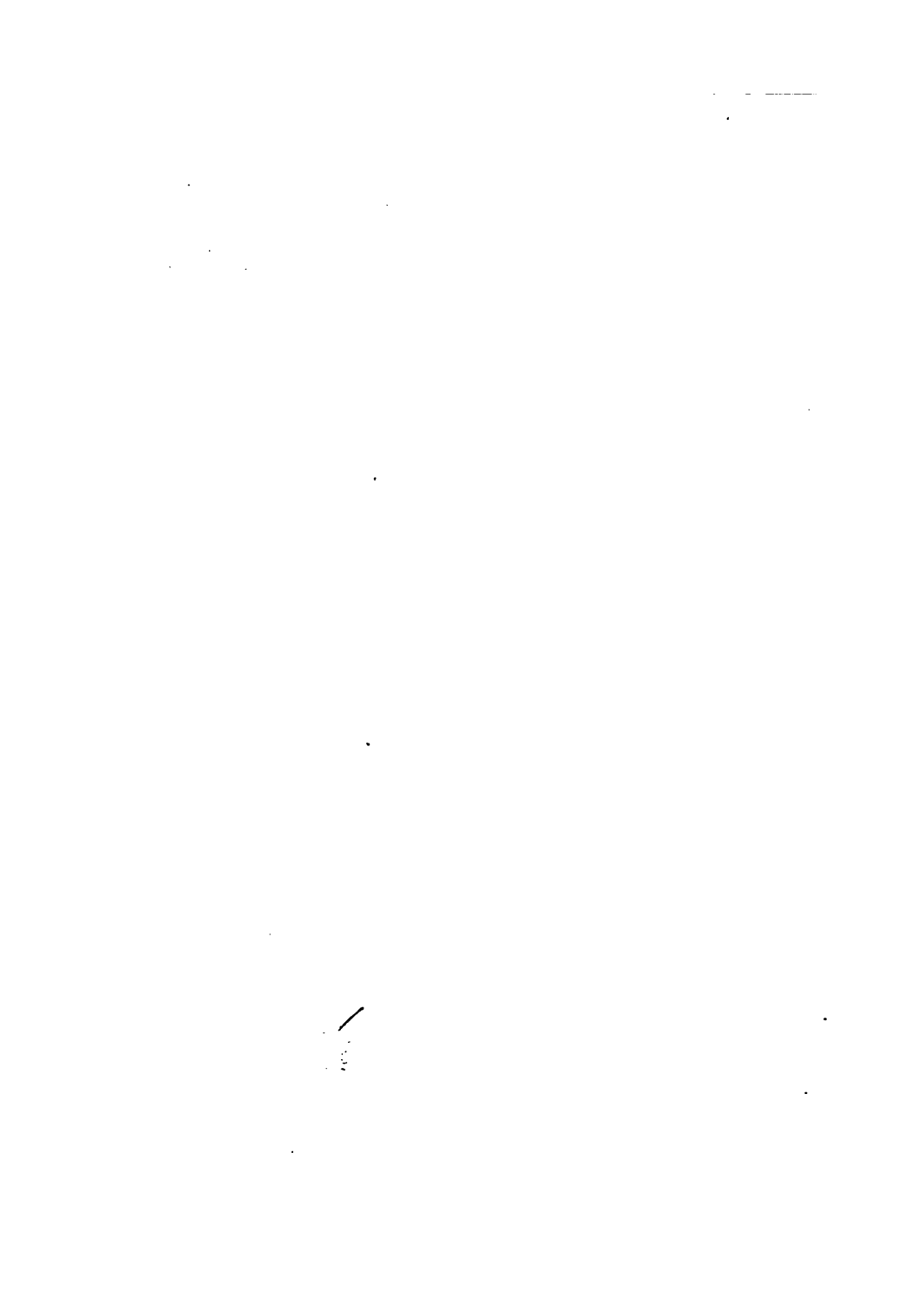
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FOREST AND MOUNTAIN
STORIES.





YAK-TRAVELLING IN THE HIMALAYA.

Page 72.

STORIES OF THE MOUNTAIN AND THE FOREST.

BY

M. A. PAULL,

AUTHOR OF "TIM'S TROUBLES," "BOUGHT AND SAVED,"
"TRUE HEARTS MAKE HAPPY HOMES,"
ETC. ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.



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Preface.

IN presenting these Stories of the Forest and the Mountain to my readers, I have to acknowledge how largely I am indebted to the fascinating books of travel, adventure, and sport from which I have culled them. My earnest wish is, that this volume may serve to interest and amuse, and also to stir up some who care only for desultory or light reading to search for themselves in the treasury of good books which lie around them. If the scheme carried out by the young Nortons and Meadows leads other school-boys to spend their holidays more enjoyably, the chief aim of this book will be realized.

M. A. PAULL.

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FOREST AND MOUNTAIN STORIES.

CHAPTER I.

A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT.

“F course there's no help for it; but what on earth will they all say? What a horrid plague to have to tell them. Well, it all comes of being my father's eldest son, and I used to think that something to be proud of;” and a comical expression crossed the good-humoured, honest face of Hal Meadows, as he reached this point in his meditations. “Poor, dear old daddy,” he went on, as he opened and spread the letter before him, for yet another perusal of the contents he already knew too well for his comfort; “what it must have cost him to write this, and disappoint us all; and he only expects me to bear my share bravely, and act as his eldest son and heir should. He shan't be mistaken in me. ‘This day I'll do my duty.’ It isn't heroic, of course, like those fellows of Nelson's had to be; but it's *right*, so it's worth doing, and that's enough.”

Hal Meadows was one of the most studious as well as the most fun-loving scholars at Hornby Hall, where about fifty young gentlemen received an admirable education, fitting them for the duties of commercial and professional life. The parents of the lads were mostly merchants and manufacturers, who looked forward to the time when their sons should help them in the great undertakings they had set on foot, or to which they themselves had succeeded from their fathers. The summer term was now within a few weeks of its close, and Hal and Joe Meadows, with their cousins, Frank and Tom Norton, were in the midst of a stiff examination, working hard, and determined to deserve the great pleasure that had been promised them at its close. This was nothing less than a two months' tour on the Continent, to include Switzerland, Italy, and the Tyrol, in the company of their uncle, Fred Meadows.

Uncle Fred was the universal favourite of every youthful relative and friend he possessed, he had such a fund of good-nature, and so much power of giving information in the very pleasantest of ways. He was also an experienced traveller, knew what was most worth seeing, and how to get at desirable places and charming sights without waste of time. Hal's cousins, Frank and Tom Norton, were the children of Mr. Meadows's widowed sister, over whom he watched with almost a father's care, and whose interests he was ever ready generously to advance. And now

Hal held in his hand his father's letter, crushing the bright prospect for the holidays :—

“MY DEAR SON,—I never before took up my pen to write to you so reluctantly as I do to-day. For some weeks I have feared lest I must curtail your proposed trip, but now I feel I must ask you to abandon the idea altogether for this year. Your dear mother has suffered much from sympathy in my anxieties of late, and I hope I know my boys well enough to feel sure they would not wish that the change to the sea-side, so necessary for her and the younger children, should be omitted on their account. I cannot honestly afford both expenses; therefore I ask them to bear bravely themselves, and help their cousins to bear bravely also, the disappointment I am compelled to cause them. Nor could I spare Uncle Fred to accompany you. He understands all my complicated business arrangements almost better than I do myself, and is invaluable to me at this critical juncture. You know enough of affairs to understand that the commercial relations of the country are seriously depressed. Banks breaking, merchants and manufacturers failing, tradesmen bankrupt, whole families reduced to penury—these we see on almost every hand. I am glad to be able to inform you that I quite believe, with the exercise of careful economy and great prudence, our firm will be able to weather the storm; but this is not compatible with

unnecessary outlay of any kind. With great confidence I appeal to my dear sons and nephews to release me from my promise to give them special pleasure during the ensuing vacation ; while I, at the same time, undertake that the proposed scheme shall not be lost sight of by me when, by God's mercy, times improve. Mother and the children join me in dear love to all of you ; and I remain your affectionate father,

HENRY MEADOWS."

"What's up ?" asked Tom Norton, when the four cousins, who shared one bed-room, retired for the night. "I've seen something in Hal's face ever since he got his letter ; only, I had no chance to inquire."

"Are you all Spartans ?" inquired Hal. "Do you all feel as if you could bear to be bitten without crying out ?"

"Whatever are you driving at, Hal ?" Joe inquired, looking at his brother with a troubled face. "What has happened ?"

"Father can't afford our tour ; that's all," began Hal.

"All !" interrupted Frank with a groan.

"He expects us to bear the news bravely, and I should be ashamed if we didn't," Hal continued, thus giving his own opinion ; and then he waited for his companions to express theirs.

"But what reason does uncle give ? Has anything gone wrong ?" queried Tom.

"Not yet," said Hal; "but things are so bad, that if he wastes money they *may* go wrong."

"I wish he'd told us sooner, or waited till after we got through our exam," remarked Frank.

"Why?" said Tom.

"Because there's nothing to work for now."

"Oh, what a cram!" cried Hal. "Why, there's more than ever to work for. If we can't do one glorious thing this summer, let's do another, and all go home with honours. I do think it would be right down mean of us to knuckle under because we have to bear a disappointment. What sort of men are we going to be if we can't bear to be turned about now and then without crying like babies?"

Hal's good-tempered and honest enthusiasm stirred that of his brother and cousins.

"You shan't outdo us in pluck, Hal," said Frank.

"And it won't be a bad way of spending a holiday to be at home in the dear old paternal mansion," continued Hal. "It's what a good many fellows would jump at—to have a fine big house to live in, ditto garden to roam and work in, and a docile venerable mare to ride which has never been known to throw a fellow in her life."

"I wish she had," exclaimed Frank; "one might have some fun then 'taming the shrew.'"

"All very well, Master Norton," retorted Hal, "till the shrew, be she horse or lady, tames you."

The lads laughed merrily.

"I think the worst part of all," Joe said presently, in a thoughtful tone, "is father's anxiety about money matters. We are talking as if we were the only people to be thought of in this difficulty."

"Right you are, Joe," said his brother, "as usual. And if four fellows between the ages of thirteen and seventeen can't make up their minds to enjoy themselves in their vacation, 'come what may,' why, I should vote them a set of confounded muffs."

"Hear, hear!" echoed Frank.

"The only difficulty about it," said Tom, "is that we have never thought about doing anything but roaming in the countries of the Continent; and now we shall have to find home occupations instead. Haven't we been coaching up in French nicely, to *parler* with the natives? Many a time my perfection in my French has almost taken good little Monsieur's breath away."

Again there was a merry peal of laughter.

"He has even," Tom continued, making the neatest little bow to his listeners, "condescended to congratulate Mastair Nor-ton on his *progrès* in the *langue française*. And now," he added, resuming his own style, "how on earth am I to keep up to the mark? But uncle's a brick; he has always indulged us boys beyond all we could have expected, and I'm not going to exhibit myself as a spoon in this disappointment. Of course it's horrid, and all that; but as Hal has beautifully remarked, what sort of fellows are we if

we can't bear downs as well as ups in this probationary state of existence? A backbone is an absolute necessity to a biped; and Christians should not let themselves be outdone by savages, who, according to the results of my deep and extensive reading, always show fortitude in adversity."

There were truth and good feeling underneath Tom's droll style, and all his companions felt it.

"Tom," said Hal, "I'm proud to think I have a born orator for my cousin."

In this pleasant and sensible manner, honourable alike to the lads themselves and their training, they bore what was, in truth, the greatest disappointment they had ever known.

In a few more weeks they reached home, laden with prizes and certificates, and were received with joy by their affectionate parents, who had all of them been, very naturally, delighted with the conduct of their sons.

Later that evening, when Uncle Fred returned home, he found all his nephews in the garden, inspecting the various pets they had left in the charge of mother or sister during the school term. Pigeons, guinea pigs, rabbits, dogs and cats, were duly examined; and the various events were related concerning them which had not already been told in letters, and some, indeed, that had been duly chronicled, but which were found to bear *viva voce* repetition exceedingly well.

"My dear lads," said Uncle Fred, after the usual enthusiastic greetings between himself and his nephews, "I have been proposing a plan to myself which I hope will meet with your cordial approval."

"It is sure to, if it is *your* plan, Uncle Fred," said Joe affectionately.

Joe was clinging still to that gentleman. The boy had been delicate, and Uncle Fred's tender care of him, through many weary hours of sickness, had endeared him inexpressibly to his youthful relative.

"I have been considering whether, as we cannot go just now to the forest and the mountain, we might not, so to speak, bring the forest and the mountain to us."

"How, Uncle Fred?" queried all the lads at once.

"We must all do our part to make my idea a success," said Uncle Fred. "This is what I thought: If we each made it our business to read up some interesting stories of adventure or discovery in the different countries of the world, we might in turn tell the tales we thus became acquainted with as the experience either of ourselves or of an imaginary friend of ours, and so pass many amusing and pleasant evenings. And depend upon it, my dear fellows, whatever knowledge we may gain in this way will prove extremely useful to us, if next summer, or at any time, we are able to manage to carry out our delightful scheme of foreign travel."

"'Tis a capital idea," said Hal; "and you, uncle, might give us a personal adventure."

"Yes," continued Frank; "real *bond fide* travellers ought not to be allowed to go to books for their stories—'them's my sentiments.'"

"I will promise you some sort of a story, at any rate," said Uncle Fred; "and you must promise me yours."

"Agreed," said the lads in a breath; but Joe remarked timidly, "I'm afraid mine won't be very interesting."

"O Joe! you are romancing already," cried Tom, laughing; "you have read more of that sort than any of us, and can tell any amount of yarns at a moment's notice. Do you suppose I'm going to believe you, when I know the fellows at school offer you fabulous sums in bull's eyes and lemonade for your hairbreadth escapes and tragedies and ghost-stories, and that you are the acknowledged story-teller of Hornby Hall?"

"Don't accuse my brother of such an unenviable notoriety," said Hal, pretending to be offended; "he's the model of truth, he would not tell a story to save himself the 'biggest flogging out.'"

"Who would that's worth a flogging at all?" queried Tom. "But, uncle, I do like this story-telling plan. When shall we begin?"

"If we are to have really good tales, worth listening to, it can't be done in a hurry, for it will need some careful preparation. Which of you will under-

take the first, and how long a time will he desire in which to read up?"

"I think I could have one ready in a week," said Frank; "but, Uncle Fred, won't you go first?"

"I would rather be last," said Uncle Fred. "I should hear what you do, and will try to make mine quite different from the rest. I think we may as well form ourselves into the Forest and Mountain Club, and you shall draw lots which shall begin."

"Yes, that's the style," said Hal approvingly.

Uncle Fred pulled some leaves from an overhanging tree, and offered them to his nephews for lots. The choice to begin fell on Joe, the youngest of the four boys, for he drew the longest leaf from Uncle Fred's hand.

CHAPTER II.

THE F. AND M. C.

“**W**HATEVER can Joe be about?” asked his mother of Uncle Fred; “the dear boy locks himself up in the library every morning after you go to business, for such a long time. I am afraid he is bent on some study that will be too much for his strength.”

“He is writing the first chapter of our book, Caroline,” replied Uncle Fred, smiling.

“Your book!” exclaimed Mrs. Meadows in surprise.

“When his chapter is ready, I shall suggest to him that he would do well to invite you to listen to its recital.”

“I don’t understand you one bit,” said Joe’s mother.

“And I am not at liberty just yet to reveal anything more,” said Uncle Fred, with his merry laugh. “I am an M. F. M. C., and that at present is a secret society; but its operations, unlike those of some secret societies, will be made public in due course.”

Hal and Frank were present, and exchanged meaning glances with their uncle.

"When do you go away, mother?" asked Hal.

"Do you want to get rid of me, my son?" she answered.

"Of course," was the lad's playful rejoinder, as he stood beside her, and caressingly laid his hand on her soft hair. "I want the sea-breezes to put a little colour into your pale cheeks, mother," he added more seriously.

"Don't say that, dear," she spoke quickly; "don't let papa hear you say anything like that. I am not going away from you at all; I should be miserable if I did. We will all of us spend some long days together by the sea, and come back at night to our own dear home; that is a very different expense to taking lodgings, and keeping up the two houses. I cannot be happy away from your father, when he may have anxiety pressing upon him; and I am sure the rest and cheerfulness of home, with all the dear home faces in it, do both him and Uncle Fred good when they come back worried and careworn with the difficulties of the day in the great bustling town.—Am I not right, Fred?"

"You are, Caroline," he assented. "At this time it is especially the place and duty of the wife and mother and mistress to look well to the ways of her household. And now there is a promise of quite an intellectual feast to reward you for your self-denial," he added, glancing drolly at Hal and Frank.

"Quite," echoed Hal, "especially when it comes to

the turn of Hal Meadows to distinguish himself and to provide the evening's entertainment. Reserved seats, two shillings; unreserved, one; a few very back seats, sixpence."

"You mercenary fellow! we shan't manage things in that commonplace style," observed his uncle

"Do tell us what you are talking about, Hal?" said his sisters.

"I am an oracle, my dears," rejoined Hal gravely, "and I tell you this: 'Time will show, events will declare; coming events cast their shadows'—well, *somewhere*."

Acting upon Uncle Fred's hints and suggestions, no sooner was Joe's manuscript almost ready, than the other boys wrote out some neat circulars. This is one of them:—

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Mr. Joseph Meadows, M. F. M. C., has kindly consented to read his spirited narrative of 'Chamois Hunting in the Alps' to the members and friends of the F. and M. C. on Tuesday the 19th day of August, at seven o'clock.

"All persons desirous of attending must make early application for tickets, as only a limited number will be issued. Tea and coffee at six o'clock in the Club drawing-room. Apply, on or before Saturday, August 16th, to

"*Secretary of the F. and M. C.*

"THE PINES."

Every ticket was taken. The younger children entered into the scheme with intense delight, and the lads felt themselves happy and important. Each member of the F. and M. C. wore a distinguishing knot of crimson ribbon at his button-hole, and took especial pains to see that the guests of the evening were comfortably seated and well served. Tea and coffee, bread and butter and cake, having been done ample justice to by all present, save the distinguished lecturer of the evening, who could not altogether conquer a certain nervous trepidation which tended to take away his appetite, the seats were arranged in a semicircle, and Joe—we beg his pardon, Mr. Joseph Meadows—began his story, with a blushing face and a modest manner and a rather tremulous voice. But as he proceeded, his own interest in what he read made him forget all besides, and he carried his charmed listeners with him, as all good lecturers are bound to do, to the very end.

HOW FLETCHER AND I HUNTED THE CHAMOIS.

Regie Fletcher and I were chums at school. We there vowed we would remain chums to the end of our days; and so far we have kept our vow with tolerable fidelity. When we left school, a singularly good fortune enabled us to obtain situations in the same great mercantile house. We went to town daily by the same train, almost always in the same carriage, walked daily in company from London

Bridge Station to our desks, and returned at the close of office hours in precisely the same fashion to our homes. Indeed, so inseparable did we appear, that a wag amongst our fellow-clerks bestowed upon us the appellation of "The Siamese Twins, second edition;" and we could only laugh at the joke, and own it had some foundation in truth.

You may imagine that we were real friends when I tell you that all this intercourse never caused us to feel tired of each other's society: we chatted or were silent, as best suited our mood, and our greatest anxiety for the first year or two of our business life was whether it was possible for us to obtain our holiday at the same time. This seemed so unlikely that we wasted a great deal of time proposing and then abandoning various schemes for its accomplishment; and were very agreeably surprised when the head of our firm, who is a splendidly got-up old gentleman, with snow-white hair and florid complexion, and bright blue eyes and smiling face, said to us, "I suppose you two boys would like to get off somewhere together for an outing, eh?" I need not tell you that in genuine astonishment and admiration of his intuitive benevolence and perception, we each said promptly and at the same moment, "Yes, if you please, sir." Whereupon, kindling and beaming with still more geniality, he presented each of us with a ten-pound note, and remarked, "There, my lads; I have had nothing to find fault with in your conduct this year.

Of course, you have made mistakes, as learners will do ; but you have been steady, punctual, and prudent. Make the best use of your money. If you take my advice, you will get right away out of England, and have a peep at the Swiss mountains. You have legs, use them ; you have eyes, see ; you have ears, listen ; and breathe as much fresh air into your lungs as you can in a fortnight. Go on Saturday, and be in your places again, without fail, on Monday fortnight."

Of course Fletcher and I began a torrent of thanks, but Mr. Essendine stopped us short : " Wait till you've been your trip, and then thank me if you like." Ever since that happy day we have had our yearly holiday together, and as regularly enjoyed the sensation of a crisp bank-note, value ten pounds, in our hands, from good old Mr. Essendine. We have not ceased to visit Switzerland yet, though we have been there seven years in succession ; for there is a marvellous fascination to us both in the glorious heights, and to one of us in the rare sport we can get following the chamois from ledge to ledge of the grand old rocks, that seem to have an eternity of being, and yet are themselves the visible results of wonderful convulsions in those ages of the world that preceded the existence of man upon its surface. In the words of a delightful writer, Herr Berlepsch : " As amongst beasts the lion ranks as king, being the representative of noble qualities and physical power ; as amongst plants the oak presents a picture of firmness

and endurance, of proud contempt of storm and weather; so granite represents all that is unconquerable and unchangeable in the kingdom of dead inorganic matter; it is, in the narrow material sense, a substance of eternal duration."

The first year or two that Fletcher and I went to Switzerland, we did just as most other people do who have a week or two to spend amongst the mountains. We made the ascent of two or three of the lower heights; we saw the sun rise from the Righi; traversed on foot with our knapsacks on our backs some of the celebrated passes; saw the usual sights; noticed the Alpine flowers with attention, for we had some taste in the direction of botany; frequented the beaten track of tourists; and came back with a superficial knowledge of the district, that, however, only sufficed to increase our desire to know it more thoroughly. So on our third visit larger views and higher aims took possession of us. "I wonder," said I, before we went, "if we could hunt a chamois."

"I should like to do something worth doing," rejoined Fletcher; "climb a mountain that no fellow has ever been up before, or kill a chamois or a bear with my own hand. We must strike away from the ordinary Swiss rounds, and live amongst the villagers themselves. I want to study the people, and their manners and customs, to see how many William Tells are living in their valleys. And above all, I must learn how to do their *jodel*."

I burst out laughing at the remembrance of the very queer noises my friend had made dozens of times when on the mountain-sides and in the valleys of the Alps, in his strenuous endeavours to imitate the inimitable.

"Nay, Fletcher," I exclaimed; "you will never be able to manage that mountain-call."

"I am going to try till I do, Wharncliffe," said he, determinately; "for what man has done, man can do."

"He must have a Swiss throat to send out that spiral yet globular prolongation of sound," I said, still laughing. "However, you have a good right to try."

Fletcher is wonderfully persevering, and with or without my permission, I knew well he would practise at the wondrous jodel.

"We must make friends with Franz Hohler," I continued, "and see if he can't recommend us to some friend of his who may teach us the way to shoot the chamois."

"There are two ways of procedure," said Fletcher; "so I find, for I have studied the subject lately. 'Solitary hunters do not generally take dogs with them,' and this is their method: 'If the hunter knows accurately the place where he is to look for his game, he starts—according to the distance he is to go if he hunts alone, as the best chamois-hunters always do—about midnight or soon after, and climbs as high through the silent night as he can do without preju-



CHAMOIS-HUNTING.
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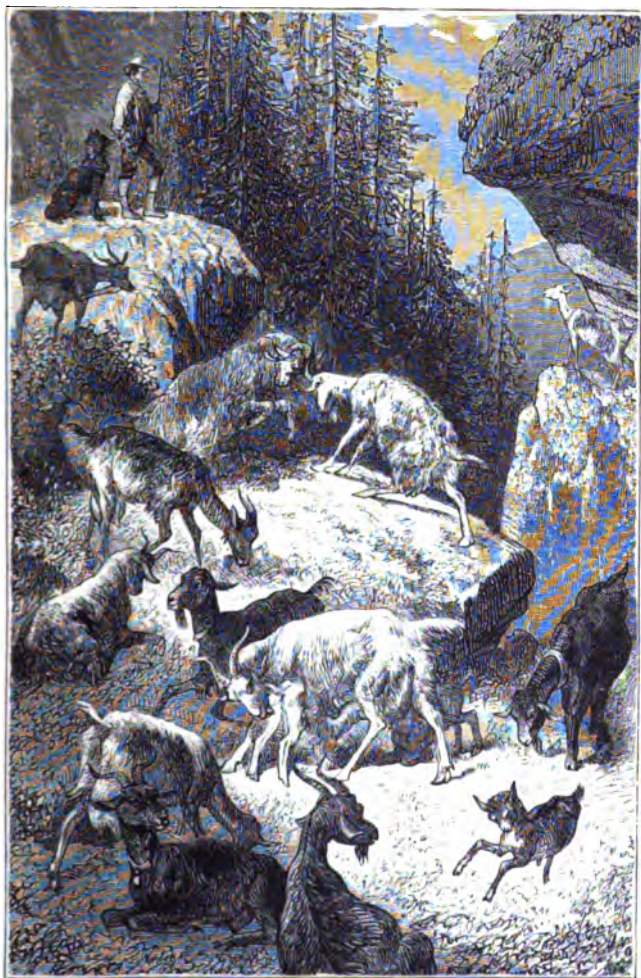
dice to his chase. He has to observe carefully the direction of the wind, that it may not bear a warning sound or scent of his coming to the chamois. If he is behind the beasts, which are still lying quietly on the grass, he creeps, still under protection of the twilight, as near as possible, and endeavours to conceal his body behind any lump of rock or tree trunk. Here he waits, ready for a shot, till the break of day. What infinite carefulness and prudence are required for these cat-like creepings! what exciting lying in wait with the utmost coolness and quiet! When the beasts have roused themselves, he chooses his victim and fires. It often happens that the resolute hunter, before the frightened chamois have found out the quarter from which they are threatened, knocks over a second beast with his double barrel. If he hits, the chamois makes a high bound and falls over; but it often happens that beasts struck but not fatally wounded are off and away with the whole herd."

"Poor creatures!" said I.

"That is one way of hunting them, according to the book I read," resumed Fletcher; "this is the other: 'The combined *trieb jagd* (driving chase) of chamois, undertaken in company by the less distinguished hunters, is less dangerous. It generally takes place in the outlying Alps, which are poorer in game, and in many respects is like the organized *battue* of the plains, as the hunters are posted at different points and dogs used for driving the game.'"

"I would rather join such a party at first," I said; "for to go alone you must have more experience than we are likely to acquire in a mere holiday."

"Yes; and according to my authority," replied Fletcher, "there is likely to be quite sufficient excitement for such prosaic folks as you and I. Listen to this: 'Three experienced shots of Appenzell were hunting on the Gloggeren, that lofty wall rising south-east from the See Alp, which one passes on the way from Weissbad over the Meglis Alp. One of them went by this lower path, a second higher up over Marwies, and the third hunter over a narrow grassy ledge on the rocky wall between the two first mentioned. The chamois were driven along this grassy ledge. The highest and lowest had easier going, and came earlier to the place where the combined shooting was to begin. The first saw the beasts coming to him—coming directly towards his rifle, and waited, looking out constantly for the third, who was driving them along the grassy ledge. The chamois come gradually nearer; he is afraid of losing his shot; lies in a feverish state of excitement; fires; and, frightened at the report, the beasts turn and run hurriedly along the ledge the same way they had come. Just at a narrow sloping place, scarcely broad enough for a man to pass where it bends round a projecting rock, they came in their wildest flight upon the hunter climbing toilsomely upwards. If the two parties had met upright on this giddy rim of rock,



GOATS AND GOAT-HERD OF THE ALPS.

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the hunter must infallibly have been dashed over a cliff, sinking for more than a hundred feet, as the chamois would instinctively, in the agony of despair, have tried to squeeze themselves between the rock and the hunter. The man prudently observed this, and, to save his life, threw himself down, and let the whole herd rush at a flying leap over him."

"Brave fellow!" I exclaimed; "I am sadly afraid I should not have shown so much pluck and presence of mind in such a predicament. I am inclined to think that I need not desire anything more adventurous than hunting the chamois in company."

On our arrival at Alpnacht a few weeks later, Franz Hohler, a worthy tradesman with whom we had lodged the year before, good-naturedly undertook to introduce us to some chamois-hunters, friends of his own, who would probably be willing to allow us to join their company. He told us many interesting particulars about the chamois, of which we were ignorant, and many queer fancies. It is said that hunters have cured themselves of giddiness by drinking warm the blood of the chamois, just as the goat's milk drunk by the goat-boys of the Alps is said to give the lads skill and pluck in climbing. These goat-herds, wild, daring young fellows, are amongst the most successful of chamois-hunters when they become men: they do not know what it is to fear, and will tread themselves, and even carry their goats, where a less experienced eye can hardly detect

a foothold. There are regions of the Alps to which the chamois, thoroughly mountain animals as they are, do not ascend—regions given up to snow and ice. But anything short of this, the wildest, the most desolate spot, may be the resting-place or the haunt of the chamois, especially if it contain even ever so little of the herbage necessary for the sustenance of these agile creatures. As many as sixty chamois have been seen in one herd, but this is an unusually large number.

The men with whom Fletcher and I were to proceed on our expedition, and from whom we were to take our first lesson in a dangerous and exciting sport, were three in number; all of them fine specimens of mountaineers—of middle stature, sunburnt, fresh complexioned, keen eyed, with figures finely developed, both lithe and powerful. One man, Baptiste Schamler, was old for a chamois-hunter; the other two were about our own age, and were called Gottlieb and Jacob Zinsli, not brothers, but cousins. In July and August the three men were employed as wild-hay-cutters, and their exploits in this direction were as entertaining and thrilling as most hunting stories could be. They entertained us with the following account, when they paid us their first visit at Franz Hohler's to settle the preliminaries of our hunt:—The grass that grows upon the ledges of the mountains is esteemed very precious for cattle, as it produces a much richer milk for butter than the

valley hay. It is the custom of the hay-cutter to collect his bundles of hay into one place upon the mountain, and thence to carry them to the valleys; or to stack the hay in some sheltered place, or to leave it heaped together till winter, and then go with his sleigh on his back and convey it to the farms below. Either of these plans is fraught with danger. We have hardly any idea in England of the perils to which the brave mountaineer is exposed in the common avocations of daily life. Sometimes he finds that his hay-stacks have been half-devoured by Christmas-time, by the mountain hares or other hungry game. When he has piled it on the sleigh, and firmly tied it on, he places himself in front of his vehicle, between its lofty shafts, and, setting it sliding in motion, plunges down the slopes with the speed of a railway train. Baptiste Schamler once took the most direct line from the hay mountains to the valley, over the terrace-shaped ledges of rock. Certain signs announced to him whilst he was above that avalanche falls were to be expected. Many parts of the common route lay in the path of terror of these winter greetings. The awful death of being buried alive threatened him. Every moment's delay increased the danger. He took his part at once—commended his soul to Heaven, and chose the lesser of two terrors. "Any one, not a mountaineer, who knows the ground," said his companions, "would consider such an undertaking mad-

ness, for it is far more probable that the adventurer would be destroyed than that his daring would succeed. Yet he resolved, like the brave man he is," and they smiled approvingly at him; "but instead of putting himself at the head of his train, he caught hold behind, stuck his head into the hay, and left the rest to chance. This bold deed succeeded; this vigorous decision saved him; and here he is to listen to his own story."

It was like the realization of a dream of our boyhood—one of the longed-for experiences of the dear old school-days in which Fletcher and I were first knit together by our similarity of tastes and desires, when we set out from our quiet lodging at Alpnacht for our first chamois-hunt. We were to reach the mountain chalet of Baptiste Schamler that night, and the next day proceed further up the mountain to those narrow defiles where the chamois-hunter waits for his prey. The chalet was one of those cottages, rich brown in hue, which form so picturesque a feature of every Swiss landscape. I must frankly own, however, that it was a more charming dwelling seen from without than it proved to be within; especially when, as now, the sun shone on its silver-glancing shingle roof, loaded with heavily mossed stones,—stones originally placed there to prevent the wind carrying it away bodily to the fissures and gullies of the mountain.

Inside, it was very bare indeed of the commonest

comforts to which we were accustomed. The cow and the goats shared the shelter of the dwelling at night with the family of Baptiste Schamler. This family consisted of a brown-skinned, fresh-coloured, dark-eyed wife; three brown-skinned, ruddy-cheeked, dark-eyed daughters, fine tall girls, athletic and vigorous looking enough for men; and one of those poor, afflicted, idiotic creatures, called *crétins*, who suffer from that dreadful and disfiguring disease so prevalent in the Alpine regions, the goitre, or enlarged throat. The presence of poor Joanna, however, made more evident the tenderness and goodness of the other women of the family; and for sturdy uprightness, honesty, and industry, I doubt whether any family in the world could have surpassed that of this Swiss mountaineer.

Almost all the appointments of the chalet were of the simplest nature and home-made. Our fare, however, was ample, and very much to our taste after our long walk in the bracing, free, delicious air of the mountains. A piece of goat's flesh was cooked by one of the dark-eyed daughters of the house, and made savoury by the addition of herbs—happily without the intermixture of garlic, which spoils so many otherwise good dishes—and swam in butter-sauce. Goat's milk and cheese, the most spicy of honey, and wholesome bread, fresh that day from the oven, made a feast fit for a hungry king. After our meal we, and the two young men Gottlieb and

Jacob, sank to sleep in soft and pleasant couches of hay in the adjoining barn. Although Baptiste Schamler and his family courteously proposed to make room for us in the living-room of the chalet, we had every reason to believe we should be much more comfortable in the sweet hay of the grange.

"Well, Fletcher," said I to my companion in the morning, "how are you, old man? What sort of a night have you had?"

"I don't know anything about the night," said Fletcher, laughing; "but I feel as fresh as a lark this morning, and ready for any number of chamois. Where are the two fellows?"

The beds of Jacob and Gottlieb were empty—they were already abroad. We got up and dressed ourselves in the suits of flannel we had been advised to wear, and went for a wash to the spring which we had observed the evening before, not far from the chalet. The water was sparkling now in the sunshine of a golden autumn morning. The great mountains around and above us were resplendent in the light, and the air was fresh and invigorating beyond my power to describe. From within the cottage, the door of which stood open, came merry girl voices, chatting, laughing, and singing over their morning work; the chair of the poor idiot girl was placed in the sunshine near the door, and she was knitting and crooning to herself the while.

Presently the mother of the family came outside

to milk the gray-skinned Alpine cow and the goats, which Gottlieb had already driven conveniently together for her. We had a long walk before us up the mountains, and might be absent for days even, so a stock of bread and cheese was, after breakfast, placed in each of our knapsacks, and a cup for water in those of Fletcher and myself, to take the place of the flasks of *Kirschwasser* which the other men, though strictly sober in their habits, were accustomed to add to their provisions. Fletcher and I could not be persuaded to follow their example; nor did the mountaineers long attempt the persuasion, but consoled themselves and us with the conclusion that we should do very well if we were used to it. We had both of us lived so far into our lives without tasting alcoholic liquors that we had no faith whatever in their good qualities, and we were firmly resolved not to break our pledges to abstain.

"If we can't climb mountains and hunt chamois on the same drink which was sufficient for the Israelites when God nourished them and supplied their needs in the wilderness, it's a pity," said Fletcher, a little scornfully.

We had a protracted and famous climb. The weather was perfect, and added greatly to our enjoyment. Our path lay at first through one of the ban-forests,—that is to say, a forest that has escaped destruction for building or fire-wood by the ban of the law or of popular rights and traditions.

Neither Fletcher nor I had any idea before this how necessary and valuable such a wood may be to the dwellers in mountainous regions. Baptiste Schamler took pains to inform us. "Every mountain village has ban-forests if it is shut in by steep valley-walls, and therefore exposed to avalanches, falls of stones, or landslips. These ban-forests are kept up from motives of prudence, not from neglect of the forests on account of superabundance of wood. There are communes which, from bad management of their forests, are deficient in firewood, and have to buy it and bring it long distances from other common forests, while at the same time they have great ban-woods immediately over them, which they do not allow to be cut down. The office of the ban-forest is to hinder, by its mass of strong upright stems, the breaking loose and sliding down of the vast heaps of snow that accumulate in the winter, and thus to prevent the formation of 'ground avalanches,'—not, as is commonly supposed, to hold up avalanches already started, like a dam. Such a forest would only be a protection against these last for a few years: in every spring the upper borders of the forest would be severely injured by the abrupt descent of the avalanches, and the foremost ranks of trees would be cut down like stalks of straw. In a few decades of years a desolate heap of fragments of trees and rocks would appear instead of the protecting forest. The inhabitants of the Alps

saw this necessity centuries ago, and therefore spared particular forests, placing them under the 'ban,' that is, declaring it unlawful to touch them. Ban-forests consist almost entirely of 'needle'-wood, especially of pines and larches and firs. Very little of the 'leaf'-wood occurs in the high forest-lands. The only trees which are extended to some degree here and there are the mountain sycamore and the white-stemmed birch, which grow up to five thousand feet. Further up above these limits the forest ceases; the trees stand no longer in continuous ranks; they are in scattered groups, and at length pass into dwarf forms, or the so-called 'knee'-timber."

"Wharncliffe," said Fletcher, gravely, "did you ever before know the difference between needle-wood, leaf-wood, and knee-timber?"

"No," I answered.

"Then be thankful," said he, in the same tone, "that you have come hither to learn."

Our journey through the ban-forest was not the easiest in the world; and for loneliness, it seemed to me unequalled by anything I had before experienced or thought of. We five men seemed to be the only human beings in existence; and of beings not human there appeared to be but few. Fletcher and I had read a great many books of travel, for as boys we had delighted in them above all other reading. The glories and beauties of the forests of the Amazon had perfectly fascinated us. I remember our dreams at

one period—whenever we did dream, for we were too healthy to indulge much in nightly vagaries—were sure to be of luxuriant creepers and gorgeous flaming blossoms, of brilliant birds, and glittering reptiles, and shining beetles, and chattering-monkeys. Once I awoke in terror, shouting that I was being strangled by a flowering parasite, rich and rank, but hideous to me when it wound itself round my throat, mistaking my trunk for that of some goodly tree it loved to climb. Slowly toiling on, and mostly in silence, for impediments met us at almost every turn, we wended our way through the dark solemn recesses of the ban-forest. “Presently an uprooted mouldering stem stops all progress. It must be surmounted. A second and a third follow; and higher up there is a whole mass, forming a natural barricade. Like broken matches, the split, gray-mouldering, dead bones of the forest lie around.” “It is the battle-field,” our mountaineers tell us, “of an avalanche, which the spring sends down as a thundering kiss to his children.” Close by is the path which it followed. The old, pale, rotting stems which its embrace killed mark the way down which the train of its snowy garment slid.

The mosses and lichens of the ban-forest form a study in themselves. Fletcher was disposed to linger over their charms more than the eager chamois-hunters could permit. He was constantly calling out to me that he had found this and that botanical prize;

and I as constantly urged him forward, and promised him another day for these treasures of the forest, which were indeed varied and beautiful. The lichens cover the bare trunks of the trees, and brighten as far as they can the dull gloom of the place. The bearded species, gray-green, brown, and white, hang like streamers from the ancient trees, and render their withered, desolated boughs instinct with renewed life. The cushions of moss sometimes rise a foot high; but dangers lurk in their green beauty, "because no safe step can be found in their strangely elastic mass, and the foot treading between hidden stones may easily be twisted and sprains be incurred."

In other parts of the forest we no longer tread upon the soft and velvety mosses, but "the layers of centuries of pine needles are woven into an elastic carpet. The roof of thick boughs is so close that only a few rays of light from above penetrate into the deep night of the forest; and thus the moss cannot grow. The way upward becomes difficult, for it is constantly steeper and more slippery on the needles." Another use of the ban-forest is to protect the villages and lands below from showers of stones. "Upon the gray, weather-worn mountain-ridges of a stratified formation are gathered broken flakes of rock, the same material that forms moraines or crumbled banks on the glaciers and covers the mountain shoulders. Part of these slide or roll far down the valley, and these constitute the stone-falls. The rocks are heaped

up on the borders of the forest, and there, in time, they themselves build up a protective dam. A third use of ban-forests is to keep off landslips. The deeply penetrating roots which generally pierce through the thin layer of soil into the crannies of the rocks prevent the saturated earth from sliding after long-continued rains."

After the forest was passed, the change was great to the open country and still greater altitudes beyond. Far off, on a glacier, we beheld for the first time the objects of our hunt. At this great distance it required the quicker eyes of our companions to distinguish the chamois, which is classed amongst the antelope species, from the common goat. But when they presently, four in number, bounded away, startled probably by some noise very much nearer to them than we were, their step was seen to be much lighter and their form more agile and more graceful. The spirits of the mountaineers rose at sight of the game.

"There will be good sport on the morrow for us, young sirs," they said, "if only you are prudent to-night. However much you may desire to talk to each other, perfect silence must rule us the whole night through."

We willingly promised obedience. After an hour's more walking, we came to a narrow path, winding along and around the summit of a dreadful gorge. A little further still, the hunters descried

evidences of the accustomed presence of the chamois. Baptiste Schamler took Fletcher with him to make a detour and arrive on the other side of this haunt of the chamois, so as to prevent their flight in that direction; Gottlieb climbed, as if he were himself a chamois, under the terrible cliff to a ledge below; and Jacob and I prepared to sleep for a few hours, and then to charge at our prey with the others in the early morning. I don't hesitate to admit frankly that this was nervous work for London clerks, accustomed though we were to the perils of road and rail, the noisy clamour and the ceaseless bustle of thronged streets, and the perpetual charge of "omnibus cavalry." Here all was so different: the very solitude was oppressive, particularly as night advanced, and one false step—pshaw! Harry Wharnccliffe, be a man!

It was easier to be a man, however, than to convince my manhood that sleep would be possible for me on a bridle-path of a precipitous mountain, where, if I only turned, as people often do in their sleep, or are popularly supposed to do, I might—well, I didn't care to pursue the subject. Life is a more inviting subject than death to most youths full of health and spirits. But do as I would, I could not help sending back loving thoughts to the quiet little home far away—to the widowed mother, and the two good little sisters that made so much of me and loved me so well; and my thoughts turned into prayers that,

for their dear sakes, no harm might come to me in my rash adventure.

Up on the mountain, waiting for the night first, and the chamois next morning, we were privileged to behold one of the most glorious sights in creation—the *Alpenglühen*, or Alpine glow; the scene which painters attempt to transfer to their canvas, but of which they cannot convey to us a tithe of the beauty; a scene which, for the manifestation of its perfect, full-orbed, wondrous charm, must come straight from the hand of *the Painter, the Architect, the Musician* of this great universe—God.

My pen is so feeble that I gladly transcribe the eloquent words of another, who witnessed the alpenglühen from the top of the Faulhorn. “We turn, and are astonished at the change which has come over the giant edifice of the high mountains during our short look round. The softly rising shoulder of the Wergisthal Alp, where on our ascent yesterday from the Scheideck we passed through a flowery sea of fiery-bright Alpine roses, which a few minutes ago was still lighted up by the sun, rests now in blue shadow; but the Eiger, the Jungfrau, and the whole mountain chain have a rosy tinge on their beds of snow and glacier slopes, whilst their rocks are every second taking a deeper colour. It is the beginning of that sublime spectacle, the ‘alpenglühen.’ The sun, a rayless, scarlet ball of fire, is resting on the back of the Chasseral, and colours all objects still

within the power of his rays with a deep purple tint. Our clothes, linen, even our faces, appear of a burning orange, and the gray blouse of our guide is a violet carmine. The dark mountain-shadows climb the Alps with giant steps, and paralyze all the colours and forms which, a few moments ago, made all the rocky forms stand out so clearly; but the intensity of the Alpine glow increases equally. Its fire burns brighter every moment. Now the sun, which seems to have expanded to a gigantic hitherto-unknown size, disappears like a gleaming coal in the west. Now it is a hemisphere resting its broad base on the Jura; now a flat segment, a long-rounded arc, looks over the mountain-chain twenty leagues away; now a narrow line—a star—a shining point. Farewell, great herald of blessings to the world! It has left us; but high up on the icy points of the loftiest Alps it has kindled its beacons, which glow like red melted metal. It is a dithyramb of flame, which nature sends up joyously through the approaching night to the friend of its life.

“It may be the three following causes which produce the Alpine glow: the nature and density of the bodies which absorb and again radiate the sun’s rays; the height and position of the different summits; and the striking contrast in colour between the twilight below and the sharp illumination of the high points. The *névé* (or frozen snow) is a mass transparent at the surface, formed by countless legions of small in-

dependent particles, whose minute surfaces of reflection, scarcely visible to the naked eye, receive the rays of the sun, and reflect them again according to the direction of their faces. This power of reflection is so great that many of the little crystals which are overshadowed by a small projecting grain of snow, and thus not immediately subject to the action of the sun's rays, receive their splendour at second hand, by the rays proceeding from other neighbouring reflecting particles. We may see how extraordinary is the power of reflection of the small crystals of which snow consists, when the wind raises the light snow-dust and it wanders sparkling like diamonds in the breeze."

The Alpine glow was succeeded for us on that memorable night by a darkness that folded all things like a black mantle. Soon Jacob was snoring loudly by my side. I did not at all approve the dull yet harsh and monotonous sound ; it, and the dread I had of not keeping still, made me restless and nervous. I am afraid that once or twice, though I have never even told Fletcher this, I was coward enough to be heartily sorry I had come, and to say to myself, "If ever I am caught on such a fool's errand as this again, I shall deserve to be shot like a chamois." But after a while, spite of my fears, I began to grow drowsy. I folded my sheep-skin around me—a couple of these delightfully warm wraps had been provided for Fletcher and myself by Baptiste

Schamler—and drawing myself in a sitting position as far from the yawning precipice as I could, and planting my back against the ascending rock, I reluctantly permitted myself to fall asleep—rather I should say, I unavoidably perceived that I was going off into the land of Nod without power to hinder the journey. Jacob's snores were the last sounds of which I was conscious, and then mountains, precipices, chamois, and even all the tender thoughts of home, were temporarily extinguished by slumber.

It was gray dawn when a hard hand on my face aroused me. It was a strange awakening; but the fingers of the hand pressed against my lips when I was about to utter an exclamation of surprise, and that touch reminded me where I was, for what purpose, and the necessity for silence. I rose softly and carefully to my feet, and allowed the warm sheep-skin to fall from me, while I opened my eyes more widely. How cold and crisp the mountain air felt in that early morning: there was no danger of my going to sleep again, so thoroughly did it rouse me. Jacob laid himself down on the path to listen; he threw up his head, and beckoned to me to watch, and kept his rifle ready. He had handed me my own just before. Then the young man sprang lightly to his feet, and awaited his prey. His quick ear had detected a sound, slight as it was, which signified the light onrush of the game.

"Fire!" he whispered, as at that moment two

chamois appeared in sight, and his own rifle was discharged at the flying creatures. My hands were trembling with excitement, and instead of firing, my rifle fell from them down, down, ringing as it fell, into the awful abyss below. I gave an involuntary step forward to recover the lost property. The next instant I was lying bleeding and senseless against the rock. But for Gottlieb Zinsli, I should have been falling, falling as my rifle had fallen, to certain death and mutilation below.

At the sound of the shot, and at sight of the something that flew past his eyes into the gorge, the mountaineer Gottlieb, who, as I have already described, chose a lower ledge of the mountain for his perch through the hours of night, was unable to determine accurately the size of the object of which he had obtained but a moment's vision, and fearing some accident, sprang up towards the pathway. A moment later, and he could not have rendered me the supreme service of throwing me back as I made that thoughtless advance; instead, we should both have been inevitably lost, and another precious life besides my own would have been sacrificed to my thoughtlessness. How he himself kept his own equilibrium, and supported himself and maintained his hold, while I fell forward against him—how it came to pass that we were preserved from toppling over together into the yawning chasm, to be shut out from human sight for ever, and to become the prey of the dreadful vul-

ture, I can never even now understand. I can only be thankful—more thankful than I felt in those first few moments when I lay with a bleeding head cut by the sharp rock, and my senses fast leaving me. Jacob ran in search of water, and Gottlieb bound up my wound; then wrapping me in the sheep-skin cloak, the good fellow prepared to carry me down to the nearest chalet. I turned white and cold, and thinking that the death I had escaped in one form was nearing me in another, and that he had, though unintentionally and to save my life, caused the injury which threatened to be mortal, the hardy and brave mountaineer did not hesitate to take up a burden that might well have appalled a man even in descending a modest declivity, and to convey me carefully down a pathway which was dangerously narrow, steep, and perilous.

Meanwhile, Baptiste Schamler and Fletcher had fared very differently, and had enjoyed rare sport. Two chamois were killed, and Baptiste pursued a third which Fletcher's rifle had wounded. Fletcher followed, and saw a struggle between the man and the beast which he declares he can never forget. "Covered by the rock, so that the excited beast could not see him, Baptiste took aim and pulled the trigger; but the gun missed fire. With quick decision he then threw his gun away, sprang upon the chamois, which could get neither backwards nor forwards between the rocks, made a lucky snatch at its horns

with first one hand, then the other, and allowed the beast, with a display of extraordinary power, to drag him thirty or forty paces over turf and rock till close to a precipice, where it fell down exhausted. Two or three bounds more would have dragged them both over it. Here, on the brink of the cliff, another struggle began after a second in a lake of blood. The hunter caught firm hold of a rough twig of fir-wood with one hand, whilst he grasped the animal's horns with the other, kneeling at the same time on its neck. He waited so a few minutes till Fletcher came up and, with a few stabs from Baptiste Schamler's bread-knife, which he called to him to use, killed the poor beast, which resisted to the last."

Gottlieb's jodel had informed Jacob that he was leaving the place, and the young man, having failed in his attempt to find water in the mountains in time to be of use, now joined the experienced hunter, Baptiste Schamler, for participation in the sport which my rashness had so sadly marred for him and Gottlieb. He returned in company with the elder sportsman and Fletcher, and sought the chamois which he had mortally wounded, and found it lying dead in the path some paces distant from the accident. The poor creature had run till it could run no longer, and then had sunk down to die.

All these particulars I learned some time after; for an attack of fever followed the slight concussion of the brain from which I had no doubt suffered. The

effects of this, our first chamois-hunt, upon Fletcher and myself were widely different. It awakened in him an ardent passion for the chase; but it entirely cured my desire to be an Alpine sportsman. Not all the warm chamois blood that I could persuade myself to drink would, I feel certain, be sufficient to cure me of giddiness. I have climbed Alpine heights since then, and I have so many dear friends in Switzerland that to visit that glorious country feels like going to a second home; but even now I cannot recall that night, spent on a narrow footpath with a precipice below me, without a shudder. And it is not of such stuff chamois-hunters are made.

"Bravo, Joe!" cried Frank impulsively, as the modest voice ceased and the boy folded his manuscript; "that's a good thing, and no mistake."

"Who says our little Joe can't do a thing or two?" said Hal affectionately.

"I beg to propose," began Joe's father, looking at his boys with a pleased smile and happy face, "that the best thanks of the audience be given to Mr. Joseph Meadows for his interesting paper, and to all the members of the F. and M. C. for the very agreeable evening which we have spent at their invitation. I feel quite sure that amongst this influential audience some one will be glad to second this vote of thanks." And he looked round at his wife, and at Mrs. Norton and the girls.

Mrs. Norton rose, and said with great propriety, and just as if she had made many such speeches before, "I beg most heartily to second this well-deserved vote of thanks, and to express my own extreme pleasure at hearing the interesting paper of Mr. Joseph Meadows." Whereupon little Elsie Meadows called out, amidst much laughter,—

"I should like to *third* it for Joe, papa."

"As there is no formal chairman," continued Mr. Meadows, "I will ask leave to convey to the lecturer this hearty expression of our appreciation of his services."

The stammering and blushing lad got up, and said simply, "I'm very much obliged to you all. I wish I'd done it better; and I'm very glad you like it," and sat down again amidst a universal clapping of hands. After which, business being at an end, supper came in, and over sandwiches, cakes, tarts, and stewed fruit the party waxed very merry indeed.

CHAPTER III.

YAKS AND PONIES IN THE HIMALAYA.



HE lot fell upon Frank Norton to prepare and read the second contribution to the annals of the F. and M. C. "Yaks and Ponies in the Himalaya" was the title he chose for his narrative. The audience at The Pines had been invited to this meeting in precisely the same way as to the first, and they attended with just as much eager interest as before.

"It is such fun," said Carrie, the eldest of the girls, "to have our own private lectures to go to, in our own house, like real grown-up young ladies go to out of doors!"

"And they're a great deal more interesting," said Fanny Norton. "I went once to an Athenæum lecture with mamma, and it was *dreadful*,—all about arguments, and illusions, and spectrums; and Latin words put in and out, I couldn't understand a bit hardly. Now Joe's was all plain English, and more like a story than a lecture."

"Only it was rather horrid when he nearly fell

down the precipice," said little Elsie; "it made me shiver."

"Twasn't Joe *really*, you know, Elsie," said Carrie.

"Oh, that was just a nice little shudder!" remarked Fanny; "I always like stories to have *shuddery* bits in them."

"You funny girl," rejoined Carrie.

"I can't think what sort of a thing Frank will write, though," said Frank's sister. "I believe he hates having to write so much. I heard him say the other day, 'Bother the pens; they're like sticks every one of them when they get between my fingers.'"

The girls laughed. "I don't expect it will be as good as Joe's," said Fanny.

This conversation had been held the day before. And now the bright eyes of Frank's sisters and cousins watched him intently, as they awaited the story he had to tell. Thus he began:—

I said to Harold Carrington the other day in our playground at Hornby Hall, "Harold, how should you like a run over the Himalaya?"

"Not safe ground just now, Frank," replied Harold. "Our Indian possessions are not at peace. Afghanistan and Cabul and its ameer are too near the Himalayan ranges for English travellers to venture there just now."

"They are the mountains I want to see, Harold," said I; "there must be such an immense satisfaction

in beholding the highest mountains in the world. It is all very well to climb Alpine peaks, or cross the Pyrenees, or to mount the Apennines, or the Carpathians, or the Oural, or the Dovrefeld, and a grand thing to ascend the Rocky Mountains or the Andes—indeed, I have a special desire to go up that venerable giant with the grand sounding name, Chimborazo; but with all these, you still feel there are higher heights and greater ascents yet to be achieved. But when your feet are planted, and your body stands panting, it may be, but exultant, on the top of Gaurisankar, the loftiest mountain of the Himalaya, you have the satisfaction of knowing that you are on the tip-top of the world, and that no one can get any higher.”

Harold had the impertinence to laugh rather ironically at my ambition, as he replied, “Unless he stood on your head, Frank;” then he added in a more serious tone, “Gaurisankar is the highest mountain in the world so far as is known at present; but neither you nor I, nor even the most learned man, can affirm that there is none higher, until the altitudes of some other peaks have been correctly ascertained. Besides,” he continued, “to get to the top of Gaurisankar is not practicable at present for Europeans; so I am afraid you will have to be contented with a few feet less than 29,002 above the level of the sea.”

“I should like to see the fellow that would keep me out from a place I wanted to go to, just to climb a mountain and do no harm to anybody,” I said pre-

sumptuously. If there is one thing I like in Harold Carrington it is this, that he hates all manner of snobbery. I did not mean to be snobbish nor boastful, but I certainly was, and I deserved the cool taking down he promptly administered. "Other English gentlemen," said he, "as good as you, and certainly older and more manly, have tried in vain to get into Nepal, in which country the highest peak of the Himalaya is situated; but the Nepalese will not allow the English to set foot in their country. Perhaps they will be good enough to make an exception in favour of such an illustrious Englishman, one who has done so much for his country and the world, as my friend Frank Norton."

"Hold, Harold," said I; "I was a conceited puppy, but I don't want any more flogging."

"It is not at all easy to get into Chinese Tibet," continued Harold, smiling at my apology; "and when you are in, instead of your being made welcome, and getting further forward, you are extremely likely to be rather roughly and rudely pushed out again. I can tell you a number of interesting things about the Himalaya, if you care to listen; for I have just been reading a splendid book about it, called 'The Abode of Snow,' the journey of an Englishman amongst these mountains, in places where very few travellers ever go."

"I thought you said it was not safe to travel there," said I.

"Nor would it be just now," returned Harold; "but he went in the year 1873, when fortunately all our Indian states were at peace with us. He was ill, and went to the hills to get a peep at the Himalaya, and to recruit; but the glorious sight of the distant peaks, and the small benefit he received to his health at the hill-stations, made him decide to push upwards, and to pursue a journey amongst them."

"All alone?" I asked.

"That was hardly practicable in such a country as India for a sick man, when he was going to travel for months where there were few houses of entertainment and little food to be had," replied Harold. "No; he set out with quite a retinue of servants. Listen to his account of the preparations he made, and the character of his men. But stop; though you are so wild about mountains, you will not thank me if I skip a splendid bit about the Marble Rocks, situated about ten miles from Jabalpur: he saw them on his way from Bombay to the hills. 'The Narbada river there becomes pent up among rocks, and falls over a ledge about thirty feet high, and then flows for about two miles through a deep chasm below the surface of the surrounding country, cut through basalt and marble, but chiefly through the latter. The stream above its fall has a breadth of one hundred yards, but in the chasm of only about twenty yards; and the glittering cliffs of white marble which rise above it are from eighty to one hundred and twenty

feet high, and are composed of dolomite and magnesian limestone.....I went up between the Marble Rocks in the early morning in a boat, by moonlight, and floated down in sunlight; and as we moved slowly up that romantic chasm, the drip of water from the paddles, and the wash of the stream, only showed how deep the silence was. A tiger had been doing some devastation in the neighbourhood, and one of the boatmen whispered that we might have a chance of seeing it come down to drink at the entrance of the cleft, or moving along the rocks above, which of course made the position more interesting. The marble walls on one side, which sparkled like silver in the moonlight, reflected so white a radiance as almost to illumine the shadow of the opposite cliffs. But the stream itself lay in deeper shadow, with here and there shafts of dazzling light falling upon it; and above, the moonbeams had woven in the air a silvery veil, through which even the largest stars shone only dimly. It did not look at all like a scene on earth, but rather as if we were entering the portals of another world. Coming down in the brilliant sunlight, the chasm appeared less weird, but hardly less extraordinary. Large fish began to leap at the dragon-flies which skimmed over the surface of the water; monkeys ran along the banks above, and chattered angrily at us; many peacocks also appeared above, uttering their harsh cries; and the large bees' nests which hung every here and there from the

Marble Rocks began to show unpleasant symptoms of life. Let every visitor to this place beware how he disturbs these ferocious and reckless insects..... Two Englishmen, I was told, were once floating through the chasm, when a ball, which one of them had fired at a peacock, slanted off from the rock and unfortunately happened to hit one of these nests. The consequence was, the bees immediately swarmed about the boat, and stung one of its occupants, who was unable to swim, so severely that he died from the effects. His companion leaped into the stream, and floated down with it; but even then a cloud of bees followed him for a long way, watching his movements, and immediately attacked his face and every portion of his body which appeared for an instant above the surface of the water.'

"How doth the little busy bee
Delight to sting mankind,
Then gather honey all the day
To satisfy its mind."

"New version of an old favourite," said I; "but it can't be much of a joke to encounter Indian bees, if they are all of a similarly bloodthirsty disposition."

"There's another good story I must tell you," said Harold, "about the 'Ranger of the Himalaya.'"

"Who was he?" I inquired.

"The traveller was now in the jungle called the Terai, at the southern base of the Himalaya, which abounds, he says, with 'wild elephants, tigers, leo-

pards, panthers, bears, antelopes, and deer of various kinds.' Then he continues: 'My Bombay servant had heard so many stories about this jungle, that he entered into it with fear and trembling. If the word *hatti* (elephant) was uttered once by our coolies, it was uttered a hundred times in the course of the morning. Before we had gone very far my *duli* was suddenly placed on the ground, and my servant informed me that there were some wild elephants close by. Now, the idea of being in a canvas palanquin when an elephant comes up to trample on it, is by no means a pleasant one; so I gathered myself out slowly and deliberately, but with an alacrity which I could hardly have believed possible. Sure enough the heads and backs of a couple of large elephants were visible in the bush; and as they had no howdahs or cloths upon them, the inference was fair that they were wild animals. But a little observation served to show that there were men beside them. They turned out to be tame elephants belonging to a well-known Himalayan character, who was hunting in the Terai, and who seems to have been met by every traveller to Masuri for the last twenty years. About thirty years ago he wandered up to these mountains on foot from Calcutta with his gun, being a sort of superior "European loafer." There his skill as a hunter enabled him to earn more than a livelihood by preserving and sending to Calcutta the skins of the golden pheasant and other valuable

birds. The traffic soon developed to such proportions that he employed many *panharris* to procure for him the skins of birds and animals, so that his returns were not solely dependent on the skill of his own hand. He married a native mountain lady, who possessed some land a few days' march from Masuri; and finally, by a fortunate contract for supplying Indian railways with sleepers from the woods of the Himalaya, he had made so much money that it was currently believed at Masuri when I was there that he was worth more than £150,000."

"Ah! Harold," I exclaimed, "if I could only become a successor to that 'Himalayan ranger,' I would treat the scholars of Hornby Hall to—"

"What?" interrupted Harold Carrington.

"A new cane!"

"You wretch, Frank! Stay; you must mean a sugar-cane, I should hope, or else your memory is not likely to be held in sweet remembrance by your fellow-scholars, and those hapless youths who shall come after them."

"But have you no more to tell me?" I inquired.

"Certainly, plenty, if you like to hear. Just listen to this about the first view of the Himalaya. You must bear in mind that the title of the book is 'The Abode of Snow,' which is the 'literal meaning, according to the Sanscrit, of the word Himalaya.' This is what Mr. Wilson saw when he looked from the military station of Landaur one morning at daybreak: 'A sea

of mist stretched from my feet, veiling, but not altogether concealing, ridge upon ridge of dark mountains, and even covering the lower portions of the distant great wall of snow. No sunlight as yet fell upon this dark yet transparent mist, in which the mountainous surface of the earth, with its black abysses, seemed sunk as in a gloomy ocean bounded by a huge coral reef. But above this, dazzling and glorious in the sunlight, high up in the deep-blue heavens, there rose a white shining line of gigantic "icy summits reared in air." Nothing could have been more peculiar and striking than the contrast between the wild, mountainous country below—visible, but darkened, as in an eclipse—and these lofty domes and pinnacles of eternal ice and *névé*. No cloud or fleck of mist marred their surpassing radiance, every glacier, snow-wall, icy *aiguille*, and smooth, rounded snow-field gleaming with marvellous distinctness in the morning light, though here and there the sunbeams drew out a more overpowering brightness.'

"Having made up his mind to get a nearer view of these magnificent mountains, he began to prepare for his journey. A tent was the first requisite, and a small one, that might be pitched on almost inaccessible places, where a large one could not find room. The people are so dirty that sleeping in the houses was not to be thought of, and the population of these exalted regions is so scanty that in many cases there might not even be the choice of a house to

sleep in. 'A good thick piece of carpet, about three and a half feet long by two and a half broad, is a great comfort, especially on snow.' So the carpet was added. A travelling-cot and a table, both of which took to pieces, and a light cane chair were the furniture. 'These things, with washing apparatus, a couple of resais, or padded quilts, a plaid, and a waterproof sheet were quite sufficient to start me in Himalayan life, so far as my residence was concerned,' he says. Then he describes the food it was necessary to take, to supplement the ordinary native supplies, which consisted of juniper-berries, edible pines, and apricots, and at the villages, milk, mutton, and coarse flour—the mutton not always of the primeest cuts or fattest sheep. 'The sportsman, however, can supply his pot with many tempting edibles. I know of no flesh equal to that of the ibex; and the navo, a species of gigantic antelope of Chinese Tibet, with the barra-singh, a red deer of Kashmir, are nearly equally good.' Pheasants, partridges, and fat blue pigeons were also sometimes to be had. Fowls and eggs are not available. Mr. Wilson heard at one place from two gentlemen of some 'very bony fowls, which required to be pounded with rocks in order to make them eatable; but I believe,' he adds, 'these gentlemen have eaten up all the fowls of Spiti, and put an end to the breed.'"

"Why don't they import some cochin-chinese?" said I. "We might send a hamper from the fowl-

house of Hornby Hall, and nobody, save its worthy master, would complain, while many ears would be spared a rare, or rather a common, infliction."

"Apricots," continued Harold, "were found extremely useful. They were bought dried from the zemindars. The kernels of their seeds also are quite eatable, and taken with the dried flesh of the fruit, make a combination not unlike that of almonds and raisins."

"Bravo! Give me the Himalaya and the apricots. How delightful to be reminded, in such a remote land, of Christmas parties in dear old England, and that most delicious of compounds!"

"Silly boy," said Harold Carrington rather severely. "I think I will pass over the description of the soups and bacon and fish and sardines which, packed in tins, proved so useful to our traveller. As you are a teetotaler, I daresay you will like to know that he took a very small supply of intoxicants, and that he makes this remark: 'In the keen, stimulating air of these mountains there is not only very little need for alcoholic stimulants, but also very little desire for them.' Mr. Wilson was fortunate enough to possess an admirable servant, called Silas Cornelius, a native Christian whom he had brought with him from Bombay. He had an Afghan cook, 'called Chota Khan, or the "Little Chief," a man of great size and weight, of rather bullying propensities, though very useful on a journey, who kept everybody but myself

in awe, and who was afraid of nothing but crossing a *jhula*, or twig bridge.' A third servant was called Phuleyram, and was chiefly of use in getting the tent and bed put up. Besides these, he had a 'bright, intelligent, little Kunait boy, about fifteen, called Nurdass. His father was a doctor, as well as a small proprietor, and his son had received such an education as could be got among the mountains. The youth, or boy as he looked, though fifteen years old, spoke Hindustani very well, as also Kunawari, and yet was never at a loss with any Tibetan dialect we came to.' "

"What a linguistic treasure!" I exclaimed.

"He was a plucky boy too," said Harold. "'He could go up mountains like a wild cat; was not afraid to mount any horse; and though he had never even seen a wheeled carriage till we got to the plains of India, yet amid the bustle and confusion of the railway stations he was cool and collected as possible, and learned immediately what to do there. He was equally at home in a small boat on a rough day in Bombay harbour; and after seeing three steamers, compared them as critically with one another as if he had been brought up to the iron trade, though there was nothing of the conceited *nil admirari* of the Chinaman about him, and he was full of wonder and admiration. It was really a bold thing for a little mountain youth of this kind to commit himself to an indefinitely long journey with people whom,

with the exception of Phuleyram, he had never seen before. His motive for doing so was a desire to see the world, and a hope of bettering his condition in it; for there was no necessity for him to leave Shaso. There was great lamentation when he left, his mother and sisters caressing him and weeping over him, and beseeching us to take good care of him.’”

“What an adventure for the boy! Did he ever care to return home?”

“‘The original idea was that Nurdass should return to the Sutlej valley, along with Phuleyram, when that caste-man of his should leave us, whether in Spiti or Kashmir; but in Chinese Tibet, Phuleyram pulled the little fellow’s ears one night, and, in defence of this, most gratuitously accused him of being tipsy, when, if anybody had been indulging, it was only the munshi himself.’”

“Cool!” I exclaimed. “Poor little Nurdass! I hope they did not trust him to that mean fellow.”

“No; that made Mr. Wilson doubtful about sending him back the long way from Kashmir to the Sutlej in company with Phuleyram alone, and on speaking to him on the subject, I found, he says, ‘that he was quite frightened at the prospect, and was not only willing but eager to go with me to Bombay, both because he wished to see a place of which he had heard so much, and because the season was so far advanced he might not be able to reach his own home before spring. So Nurdass came on

with me to Bombay, where he excited much interest by his intelligence and open disposition; and I might have taken him on further with me, had he been inclined to go, but he said that though he was not afraid of the *kali pani*, or dark water, yet he would rather not go with me then, because he had made a long enough journey from his own country and seen enough wonders for the first time. Several distinguished persons on our way down wished to take him into their employment; but one day he came to me crying, with his hand upon his heart, saying that there was something there which made him ill, and that he would die unless he got back to his own *pahar*, or mountains. He could not have heard of the *heimweh* of the Swiss, and I was struck by his reference to the mountains in particular.”

“Poor old lad, we know something at Hornby Hall of *heimweh*—don’t we, Harold? Haven’t we all known—I mean every fellow that’s got a heart and knows *anything*—what it is to sit down on our box and almost cry our eyes out thinking of the mother at bed-time that dreadful first night? I don’t like Nurdass any the less for his home-sickness, do you?”

Harold Carrington only smiled gently, and went on. “There was evidently no affectation in the feelings he expressed, so, knowing his wonderful cleverness as a traveller, but taking various precautions for his safety, which was likely to be endangered by his confidence in mankind, I sent him back from

Bombay alone to the Himalaya, and have been glad to hear of his having reached Kotgarh without any mishap."

"I should like to make Nurdass's acquaintance," I said; "he must have been a boy worth going a mile or two out of your way to shake hands with."

"Part of his journey," continued Harold Carrington, "Mr. Wilson travelled in a *dandi*, which he thus describes: 'It consists of a single bamboo about nine or ten feet long, with two pieces of carpet slung from it, one for the support of the body, and the other for the feet. You rest on these pieces of carpet, not in line with the bamboo, but at right angles to it, with your head and shoulders raised as high above it as possible; and each end of the pole rests on the shoulders of one or of two bearers. The *dandi* is quite a pleasant conveyance when one gets used to it, when the path is tolerably level and the bearers are up to their work. The only drawbacks then are, that when a rock comes bowling across the road like a cannon shot, you cannot disengage yourself from the carpets in time to do anything yourself towards getting out of the way; and that, when the road is narrow, and, in consequence, your feet are dangling over a precipice, it is difficult for a candid mind to avoid concluding that the bearers would be quite justified in throwing the whole concern over, and so getting rid of their unwelcome and painful task. For, when the path is covered with pieces of rock,

as usually happens to be the case, and the coolies are not well up to their work, which they almost never are, the man in the dandi is not allowed much leisure for meditation of any kind, or even for admiring the scenery around; for unless he confine his attention pretty closely to the rocks, with which he is liable to come into collision, he will soon have all the breath knocked out of his body. On consulting a Continental *savant*, who had been in the inner Himalaya, as to whether I could get people there to carry me in a dandi, he said, "Zey vill carry you, no doubt; but zey vill bomp you." And bump me they did, until they bumped me out of adherence to that mode of travel. Indeed, they hated and feared having to carry me so much, that I often wondered at their never adopting the precipice alternative."

We had a good laugh at the dandi story. "As the traveller went along," continued Harold, "he was greatly struck by the magnificent deodars or cedar trees. 'They sometimes rise to almost two hundred feet, or half the height of St. Paul's,' and 'have their tapering stems and green arrowy spikes covered by a clinging trellis-work of Virginia creepers and clematis.' In another place he compares this white clematis to a veil which adorns the dark beauty of the tree. This tree is found between five and nine thousand feet high; and cedar-wood is used in India for building and railway purposes. It is believed to be of the same species as the cedar of Lebanon. At

places called Jangi, Pangay, and Karang, there were found singular praying apparatus; at the latter two the ordinary prayer-wheel—which is a brass or bronze cylinder, about six inches long and two or three in diameter—containing a long scroll of paper, on which were written innumerable reduplications of the lama prayer, ‘Om mani pad me haun,’ which means, ‘O God, consider the jewel in the lotus. Thy will be done.’ This wheel is turned from left to right in the monk’s hand by means of an axle which passes through its centre. ‘At Jangi there was a still more powerful piece of devotional machinery, in the shape of a gigantic prayer-mill made of bronze, about seven or eight feet in diameter, and which might be turned either by the hand or by a rill of water, which could be made to fall upon it when water was in abundance. This prayer-mill contained I am afraid to say how many millions of repetitions of the great lama prayer, and the pious ritualists of Jangi were justly proud of it, and of the eternal advantages which it gave them over their carnal and spiritually indifferent neighbours. The neophyte who showed the prayer-mill to me turned it with ease, and allowed me to send up a million of prayers!’ There, Frank, what do you say to praying in that fashion?” queried Harold.

“It makes me think of what Jesus Christ said: ‘Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do,’” I answered.

"But perhaps," said Harold, "when we kneel down and go through the form of prayer that we are expected to do, we are often not one whit better than the people of Jangi, praying by rote instead of by heart."

We were quiet for a little before Harold went on:—"The Ruhang or Roonang Pass was the next achievement you will care to hear of; and at this point, from Lippe to Sugnam, Mr. Wilson had his first ride on the yak, or *Bos grunniens*, grunting ox, or ox of Tibet, for it has all these names, and 'you may take your choice.' 'It certainly,' he says, 'is a magnificent animal, and one of the finest creatures of the bovine species: its back is more like an elephant's than anything else. The shortness of its legs takes away somewhat from its stature; and so does its thick covering of fine black and white hair, but that adds greatly to its beauty. Indeed it is the shaggy hair and savage eye of the yak which make its appearance so striking; for the head is not large, and the horns are poor. The tail is a splendid feature, and the white tails of yaks are valuable as articles of commerce. The zo-po, on which I often rode, is a hybrid between the yak and the common Indian cow. It is considered more docile than the yak, and its appearance is often very beautiful. They flourish only in cold, snowy regions, and if taken to the plains, die of liver disease.'"

"Are they all tame?" I inquired.

"No; but our traveller was not fortunate enough to see any wild ones. He heard, however, of their being shot, and that the way this was accomplished was 'by two holes in the ground, communicating with each other beneath, being prepared for the hunter in some place where these animals are likely to pass. If the wild yak is only wounded, it rushes in its fury to the hole from whence the shot came, on which the hunter raises his head and gun out of the other hole and fires again. This rather ignoble game may go on for some time; and the yak is described as being in a frenzy of rage, trampling in the sides of the holes and tearing at them with its horns.'"

"Oh! I call that dreadfully mean sport," I said. "It isn't worthy of freedom-loving men to serve a poor beast in that hideous fashion."

"You must remember they are very fierce creatures," replied Harold Carrington. "Mr. Wilson says: 'Even the yaks of burden, which have been domesticated, or rather half domesticated, for generations, are exceedingly wild, and the only way they can be managed is by a rope attached to a ring through the nose.'"

"I thought that sort of thing was voted against the other day at Exeter, and declared illegal, when an exhibitor of a bear had taken a fancy to lead Bruin about in that way, as he said, to avoid danger."

"Very likely, Frank," answered Harold; "but there is a law to prevent cruelty to animals in Eng-

land, which I am afraid does not extend to our Indian dominions; and it may be that the cartilage of the yak's nose is less sensitive than that of the bear. But pray don't hold me responsible, my dear fellow, for the treatment, good, bad, or indifferent, of the yak family, since I have never even seen one of these strange yet useful brutes. Mr. Wilson writes: 'I had scarcely had time at Lippe to admire the yak which was brought for my use than, the man in charge having dropped the rope, it made a furious charge at me; and I found afterwards that yaks invariably did this whenever they got a chance.'

"How agreeable!"

"Very. 'I cannot say,' he continues, 'whether this was done because I was evidently a stranger, or because they regarded me as the cause of all their woes; but certainly as we went up that terrible and apparently endless Ruhang Pass with one man pulling at the yak's nose-ring in front, and another propping the beast behind with the iron shod of my alpenstock, the *Bos grunniens* had an uncommonly hard time of it, especially when he tried to stop. He did not keep grunting without good reason therefore; and I could not help thinking that my *Pæphagus* had been perfectly justified in his attempt to demolish me before starting.'"

"That's not bad. I hope the poor beast had never heard—

'The man of kindness to his beast is kind,
But brutal actions show a brutal mind.'

It's my opinion his ideas of Andrew Wilson, Esq., would not be very flattering ones, if he had any."

" 'If my reader,' says the traveller, 'wants to get an idea of the comfort of riding upon a yak, let him fasten two Prussian spiked helmets close together along the back of a great bull, and seat himself between them.' "

"It might be as well to ask the bull's leave first," I said, "else the experiment might end in a toes up instead of a ride."

Harold laughed, and went on:—" 'This is the nearest idea I can give of a yak's saddle, only it must be understood that the helmets are connected on each side by ribs of particularly hard wood. The sure-footedness and the steady though slow ascent of these animals up the most difficult passes are very remarkable. They never rest upon a leg until they are sure they have got a fair footing for it; and, heavy as they appear, they will carry burdens up places which even the ponies of the Alps would not attempt. So up I went on a yak along a most curious pathway, which slanted across the face of an immense slate precipice. From below it appeared impossible for any man or animal to pass along it; and sometimes I had to dismount, and even the saddle had to be taken off my bulky steed, in order that it might find room to pass.' After this, Mr. Wilson came to such terrific ascents and descents as even a sure-footed yak could not be trusted to traverse. And he became

so ill that he could not walk, and had to be carried again in his dandi, much to the annoyance of the coolies. Still he pushed on, for he was confident that the air of the mountains was safer for him than descending into the plains, where the dreadful hot winds would have awaited him. The precipices of slate were very difficult and dangerous. In some places ropes of twisted juniper branches were stretched from one protruding end of slate to another, and slabs of slate placed on these, with their inner ends resting on any crevices which could be found in the precipice wall. Sometimes these slabs went out from underneath their feet, while others came crashing down over and between their heads occasionally; for it seemed to him that the whole of that precipice had got into the habit of detaching itself in fragments into the river beneath."

"And a very ugly habit, too," I remarked.

"Mr. Wilson pushed on to a place called Pu, in order to avail himself of a Moravian missionary's medicines; but when he arrived, that good man was absent. His wife, however, gave the sick traveller access to her husband's stores. There he continued to be so ill that he was compelled to lie in his tent for weeks, and the missionary's wife, who often came to see him, feared he would die. As he lay there alone—for he could not bear the noise of his servants—he was exposed to various dangers and annoyances. Flies tormented him, while the appearance of scorpions

and snakes was anything but agreeable. 'Huge savage Tibetan dogs,' he says, 'used to come down the mountain-sides from a lama nunnery and other houses above, and prowled round my tent or poke into it, in search of what they could find.....One splendid red dog came down regularly with long leaps, which I could hear distinctly; and I had quite an affection for him until, one night, I was awakened from an uneasy slumber by finding his mouth fumbling at my throat, in order to see if I was cold enough for his purposes!'"

"Bah!" I ejaculated; "horrors!"

"This was a little too much, so I told Silas to watch for it and pepper it with small shot from a distance; but, either accidentally or by design, he shot it in the side from close quarters, killing it on the spot, its life issuing out of it in one grand, hoarse, indignant roar. Possibly it occurred to my servant that the small shot from a distance might be a rather unsafe proceeding.' Next he was treated to the visit of a 'yellow or snow bear (*Ursus isabellinus*), which usually keeps above the snow-line, is highly carnivorous in its habits, and often kills the yaks of Pu and of other villages when they are sent to graze in summer upon the high alp.' 'I was lying awake,' he says, 'exhausted by one of the paroxysms of my illness, when a large, strange-looking figure stepped into the moonlight just before my tent, and moved about there with the unsteady, swaying motion of a

drunken man, and with its back towards me. My first idea was that this was one of the Chinese Tartars encamped beside the temple.....so I let my hand fall noiselessly over the side of the couch upon the box which held my revolver. It was only natural that I should think so, because it is very rarely that any animal except *homo sapiens* moves erect upon its hind-legs, or, I may add, gets drunk. But still there was something not human in the movements of this creature; and when it began slowly to climb up one of the apricot trees in a curious fashion, I could not help exclaiming aloud, "Good heavens! what have we got now?" On this it turned round its long head, and gave a ferocious growl, enabling me both to see and hear that it was one of the great snow-bears which infest the high mountains, but enter seldom and only by stealth the villages. I thought it prudent to make no more remarks; and, after another warning growl, evidently intended to intimate that it was not going to be balked of its supper, the bear continued up the tree, and commenced feasting on the apricots. As may be supposed, I watched somewhat anxiously for its descent; and as it came down the trunk, the thought seemed to strike it that a base advantage might be taken of its position, for it halted for an instant, and then gave another warning growl. It repeated this manœuvre as it passed my tent, on its four legs this time, but otherwise took no notice of me; and there was a

curious sense of perilous wrong-doing about the creature, as if it were conscious that the temptation of the apricots had led it into a place where it ought not to have been."

"That's a good story, Harold. Poor old bear; he was just as much of a sneak as the boys that get caught for stealing apples. Don't they look foolish! But Mr. Wilson must have greatly preferred that creature's room to his company."

"Leaving Pu, which, though 10,000 feet high, is in the Suttlej valley, the traveller, as soon as ever he was well enough, set out for Shipki, accompanied by the missionary, who had meanwhile returned, and now kindly volunteered to journey with him for a few days. A glorious mountain rose from the bank of the Suttlej river (which is at an ascent of 9000 feet) 'to the height of 22,183 feet, in gigantic walls, towers, and *aiguilles* of cream-coloured granite and quartz, which had all the appearance of marble..... In appearance it was somewhat like Milan cathedral divested of its loftiest spire, and magnified many million times, until it reached the height of 12,000 feet; and I either noticed or heard several great falls of rock down its precipitous sides during the eight days I was on it or in its immediate neighbourhood. Here and there the white rock was streaked with snow, and it was capped by an enormous citadel with small beds of *névé*; but there was very little snow upon the gigantic mass of rock, because the

furious winds which for ever beat and howl around it allow but little snow to find a resting-place there.' They arrived at Shipki, but they were at first absolutely refused admission to the place by five young Tartar women, who drove them from every suitable spot where they attempted to pitch their tents, and were almost ready to literally beat them off the ground, while the men looked on."

"Women's rights in Tartary," I exclaimed.

"At last a man, out of regard for the missionary, who had shown him kindness, allowed the tents to be pitched on his land; but do what they would, the travellers could get no further into Chinese Tibet. So after a rest at Shipki, they left the country of the Grand Lama and his fierce Tartar subjects, to proceed to Kashmir. Many *jhulas* are in the way. A *jhula*, or twig-bridge, is thus described:—'These bridges are constructed of twigs, chiefly from birch trees or bushes, twisted together. Two thick ropes of these twigs, about the size of a man's thigh or a little larger, are stretched across the river, at a distance of about four to six feet from each other, and a similar rope runs between them, three or four feet lower, being connected with the upper ropes by more slender ropes, also usually of birch twigs twisted together, but sometimes of grass, and occurring at an interval of about five feet from each other. The unpleasantness of a *jhula* is that the passenger has no proper hold of the upper ropes, which are too thick

and rough to be grasped by the hand, and that, at the extremities, they are so far apart that it is difficult to have any hold of both at the same time, while the danger is increased by the bend or hang of the jhula, which is much lower in the middle than at its ends. He has also to stoop painfully in order to move along it; and it is seldom safe for him to rest his feet on the lower rope, except where it is supported from the upper rope by the transverse ones. To fall into the raging torrent underneath would be certain destruction. The high wind which usually prevails in the Himalaya during the day makes the whole structure swing about frightfully.' Such a bridge presented a formidable obstacle to a sick man, one would have thought; but Mr. Wilson surprised the mountaineers, who in each district assisted in the transport of his goods, and when necessary of his person, by his coolly walking across. They mistook want of physical strength for want of nerve. At a place called Nako the kind-hearted missionary took his leave. Here also the traveller purchased a pretty, large, shaggy white dog, of a breed common all over China, to which they gave the name of its birth-place. For some time it was very fierce and wild, and fought other dogs with great skill. 'It had the utmost dread of running water, and had to be carried or forced across all bridges and fords.'

"That showed his good sense," I said, "if jhulas were the fashion."

“‘Nako became a most affectionate animal, and was an admirable watch. It never uttered a sound at night when any one came near it, but quietly pinned him by the calf of the leg, and held on there in silence, until some one it could trust came to the relief. The Nakowallah was a most curious mixture of simplicity, ferocity, and affectionateness. I left him with a lady at Peshawar, to whose little girls he took at once in a gentle and playful manner; but when I said, “Good-bye, Nako,” he divined at once that I was going to desert him. He leaped on his chain, and howled and wailed.’

“In the British-Himalayan province of Spiti Mr. Wilson began to make use of the mountain pony, or *ghunt*, a marvellously sure-footed little animal, even surpassing the yak. ‘The great substitute for paper here, as in all these snow-lands, is the inner bark of the birch tree, which is of a light yellow colour and very soft, though of a close texture. It is very good for all wrapping purposes, and could be used for writing on if needed.’ Spiti worships Buddha, and quite a number of Buddhist monasteries for the lamas are perched on eminences in these mountainous regions. There is a place along the great valley of the Spiti river where I should have no objection to stand and behold what Mr. Wilson describes. ‘Both on this day’s journey and on the next, the banks of the river and the mountains above them presented the most extraordinary castellated forms. In many parts the bed of the Lee was hundreds of yards

broad, and was composed of white shingle, great part of which was uncovered by water. The steep banks above this white bed had been cut by the action of the elements, so that a series of small fortresses, temples, and spires seemed to stand out from them. Above these again, gigantic mural precipices, bastions, towers, castles, citadels, and spires rose up thousands of feet in height, mocking in their immensity and grandeur the puny efforts of human art, and yet presenting almost all the shapes and effects which our architecture has been able to devise; while yet higher, the domes of pure white snow and glittering spires of ice far surpassed in perfection, as well as in immensity, all the Moslem mosjids and minars. It was passing strange to find the inorganic world thus anticipating, on so gigantic a scale, some of the loftiest efforts of human art; and it is far from unlikely that the builders of the Taj and of the Pearl Mosque at Agra only embodied in marble a dream of the snows of the Himalaya or of the Hindu Kush."

"That's poetry," I said. "Why, Harold, your traveller and our little Joe would be of one mind, perhaps. Do you know, Joe believes that God has given us the pattern in nature of everything we require in art: that, just as he gave us the moral pattern in his Son of the life eternal that we ought to begin to live here upon earth, so he has also given us the patterns of all the things which are beautiful and fitting for our temporal life. Joe goes on about

it sometimes,—about the wings of the birds giving the idea of sails, and the tails of birds suggesting the fan and its different uses, and the muscles and framework of our own bodies supplying the patterns of different mechanical powers. And he would say the same of these snow-buildings.”

“Well done Joe,” said Harold; “that is an idea worth thinking out. In the Shigri valley, of which the literal meaning is ‘the valley of glaciers,’ Mr. Wilson encountered a snow-storm.”

“Don’t you think, Harold,” I asked, “that the word ‘valley’ is rather a deceptive one when used of places ten thousand feet above the level of the sea?”

“It depends entirely on the sense which you choose to attach to it. It is certainly the right word,” said Harold. “A valley is simply a depression between two ascents, and at how many feet this may happen to occur above or even below the level of the sea, matters not at all.”

“I have no doubt you are right; proceed.”

“This was how the Shigri valley looked after the storm: ‘In the twilight everything looked white, and assumed a ghastly appearance. The pond was white, and so were the stones around it,—the foaming river, and the chalky ground on which our tents were pitched. The sides of the mountains were white with pure, new-fallen snow; the overhanging glaciers were partly covered with it; the snowy peaks were white, and so were the clouds, faintly illuminated by the

setting sun veiled with white mist. After dark, the clouds cleared away entirely, and, clearly seen in the brilliant starlight,

“Above, the spectral glaciers alone”

beneath the icy peaks; while, above all, the hosts of heaven gleamed with exceeding brightness in the high pure air.’ It was in this Shigri valley, where they were compelled to cross immense glaciers, because there was absolutely no other way for them to proceed, that the full value of the plucky ponies of Spiti became very plain. One glacier took almost three hours to cross, and Mr. Wilson says: ‘I should have been the whole day upon it, but for the astounding performances of my little Spiti mare, which now showed how wise had been the selection of it for this difficult journey.....She sprang from block to block of granite, even with my weight upon her, like an ibex. No one who had not seen the performance of a Spiti pony could have believed it possible for any animal of the kind to go over the ground at all, and much less with a rider upon it. But this mare went steadily with me up and down the ridges, over the great rough blocks of granite and the treacherous slabs of slate.’ The three or four times when, out of pity for her, the traveller dismounted, ‘she required no one to lead her, but followed us like a dog, and was obedient to the voice of her owner. Shortly before coming to the glacier,

I thought she was going over a precipice with me, owing to her losing her footing on coming down some high steps; but she saved herself by falling on her knees, and then making a marvellous side-spring. On the glacier, though she sometimes lost her footing, yet she always managed to recover it in some extraordinary way.....Even when I was on this mare, she would poise herself on the top of a block of granite, with her four feet close together after the manner of a goat; and she leaped across crevasses of unknown depth after having to go down a slippery slope on one side, and when on the other she had nothing to jump upon except steeply inclined blocks of stone.’”

“What a little beauty!” I exclaimed enthusiastically. “The traveller on the pony in that attitude, with the Himalayan peaks in the near distance and the glacier below, would make a good picture. When I’m an artist I shall attempt it.”

“Captain Harcourt, another Indian traveller, computes the width of this glacier at nearly two miles; and Mr. Wilson’s party wandered through ignorance of the route, so that he says they must have gone over a good deal more than two miles of ground; and he adds, ‘I could not have got over it except by riding on this pony. The two Losar yaks, also, magnificent black creatures with enormous white tails, did wonders; but their indignant grunting was something to hear.’”

“No wonder they expostulated in yak language,”

I said; "the only wonder was they did such awfully hard work at all."

"They had to be goaded a good deal, and were not so surprising as the slender-legged Spiti mare. Of course the latter had no shoes; it is not usual to shoe the horses of the Himalaya. The ponies are such good judges of what their strength is equal to, and take such real interest in surmounting difficulties, that their riders should not presume to judge for them. They stop to recover themselves, and take breath when and where they please and for as long, and do not abuse this freedom. 'More trying is their fondness for trotting or ambling down the steepest descents on which they can at all preserve their footing, and they show considerable impatience when restrained from doing so, and have expressive ways of their own of saying to their rider, "Why don't you trust me and let me go down at my own pace? I shall take you quite safely." This ambling down a precipitous mountain-side is particularly unpleasant when the path is a corkscrew one, with many and sharp turnings; because, when the pony rushes down at a turning, it seems as if its impetus must carry it on and over. But at the last moment it manages to twist itself round so that it can proceed in another direction; and I think these intelligent little creatures take a pride in making as narrow a shave of the precipice as possible, and in making their riders feel as uncomfortable as they can. They are also great in wriggling

you round delicate points of rock, where the loss of half an inch would send both horse and rider into the abyss.' ”

“ Pleasant ! ” I ejaculated.

“ On this glacier,” said Harold, “ Mr. Wilson and his party encountered yet another danger. They had prepared to breakfast on it, and just as they sat upon the stones the ice gave a crack beneath, and the stones began to sink. You may imagine they were not long in removing, though Silas and Nurdass stayed long enough to gather up the breakfast things.”

“ Was it a crevasse beneath them ? ” I inquired.

“ Yes ; on examination they found their camping-ground was between the lips of a crevasse, which was blocked up with rocks. The earthy particles on this glacier, from the crumbling peaks and precipices above, had made such a covering that grass and flowers were actually growing in some places. Owing to the untrustworthiness of his saddle, it was a wonder Mr. Wilson ever told the story of his adventures. Listen to this : ‘ We came to some high steps—that is to say, large stones lying so as to make natural steps, each about two and a half or three feet high—leading down upon a narrow rock-ledge, which ran (above a precipice) slightly turned inwards from the line of descent. It was madness to ride down here ; but I had been so worried by the fatigue of the road, and by constant mounting and dismounting, that I preferred doing so ; and the pony quite justified my con-

fidence. But at the most critical moment, when it stepped with both feet from the last stone on to the ledge, when I was leaning back to the very utmost and everything was at the highest strain, then, just as its feet struck the rock, the crupper gave way, and the saddle slipped forward on the pony's neck, throwing us both off our balance.'"

"*Rayther* awkward!" I ejaculated.

"'We must have both gone over hundreds of feet, had not a preservative instinct enabled me to throw myself off the saddle upon the ledge of rock. This movement of course was calculated to send the pony outwards, and all the more surely overboard; but in falling I caught hold of its mane, pulled it down on the top of me, and held it there until some of the *bigarris*, or carriers, came to our release. A short time elapsed before they did so, and the little pony seemed quite to understand and acquiesce in the necessity of remaining still. I was riding alone at the time of the accident, and, had we gone over, should probably not have been missed at the time nor found afterwards. Nor can I exactly say that it was I myself who saved us both, because there was not an instant's time for thought in the matter.'"

"That's the best bit you have given me from your famous book, Harold," I said; "that's something like an adventure."

"At the next camping-ground he purchased another dog, from some Kulu shepherds. This dog, a

young one, was called Djeola, and its name was soon changed by the servants into Julia. Julia and Nako got on pretty well together. Nako showed no jealousy but rather contempt of the younger dog, unless it ventured to draw near when he was feeding, and soon Julia learned that such a proceeding was dangerous. When first purchased by its new master, Djeola was very indignant, and being fastened to the tent-pole, it almost dragged the tent down in its efforts to get free. It closely resembled a Scotch collie in appearance, only it was much larger. 'Take,' says Mr. Wilson, 'a black-and-tan collie double its size, and you have very much what "Julia" became after he had been a few months in my possession; for when I got him he was only five or six months old. The only differences were that the tail was thicker and more bushy, the jaw more powerful, and he had large dew-claws upon his hind feet. The wild dog is said to go up to the snow-line in the Himalaya, and to hunt in packs; but I never saw or heard of any, and I suspect their habitat is only the Indian side of the Himalaya. Such packs of dogs undoubtedly exist on the Western Ghauts of India, and they are not afraid of attacking the tiger, overcoming it piecemeal, while the enraged lord of the forest can only destroy a small number of his assailants; but very little is really known about them.'

"What became of Djeola?" I inquired. "I should be glad of him."

"He was left with a friend of the traveller at Puna. It is curious that amongst the Himalaya there are hardly any lakes and a great lack of perennial waterfalls. Altogether, the impression left by these giant mountains seems to be one of almost awful splendour and loneliness. The grandeur becomes oppressive, because there is so much of it, and so little variety in so vast an extent of country. What would be great mountains in Switzerland are here only little hills; but yet these highest mountains in the world 'remain unsurpassed, and even unapproached, as regards all the wilder and grander features of mountain scenery.' In the Tsarap Lingti valleys yet another phenomenon awaited Mr. Wilson's admiration, from the variegated colours of the rocks which formed the precipices. 'Sometimes the sunlight came down through a dark-coloured ravine like a river of gold. In certain lights the precipices appeared almost as if they were of chalcedony and jasper. The dark-brown manganese cliffs looked exceedingly beautiful; but no sooner was one extraordinary vista left behind, than a different but not less striking one broke upon the view.' From Seni Goupa to Phe a long and difficult jhula had to be crossed. 'It was amusing to notice the looks of the dogs as, wrapped in plaids, they were unwillingly carried over on the backs of coolies.' Marmots are plentiful in some of the Himalayan valleys. The party shot several of them, and found their fur soft

and thick ; they were larger than hares, though shorter in the body. At this season they were very fat."

"I suppose they had stuffed themselves for winter quarters? What a convenience to be able to take in supplies to last for months, and then not to have any more trouble about satisfying one's tremendous appetite for months and months!"

"I am sorry I haven't the power to oblige you by changing you into a marmot," said Harold dryly. "For my own part, I very much prefer to be a boy who requires fresh food every day."

"Perhaps, taking all things into consideration, I should also."

"They sat at the entrance to their holes, and when shot often escaped down into them to die. They undoubtedly communicate with one another by their shrill cries, and have a curiously intelligent air as they sit watching and piping at the mouth of their subterranean abodes. The marmot has a peculiar interest as one of the unchanged survivors of that period when the megatherium, the sivatherium, and the other great animals whose fossil remains are found in the Sewalik range, were roaming over the Himalaya, or over the region where these now rise."

"Yet once more, on the Omba Pass, on a terribly cold night, another pony carried Mr. Wilson in places where it was almost impossible to believe in safety for man or beast. Over long slopes of snow, 'the

pony absolutely refused to move a step without my allowing it to put its nose down close to the snow ; and though, when it was in such an attitude on a steep slope, there was considerable difficulty in keeping on its back, I found it could be trusted to go down safely in that way ; and carry me down it did, until we got into a deep and excessively dark gorge where it was impossible to ride.' But to the end of that dismal journey in the dark over the snow, the pony followed safely, proving these creatures to be about as sagacious and wonderful as any animals I ever read of. And now the chief difficulties of the mountains were over, and Mr. Wilson soon arrived at beautiful Kashmir, where he rested, and then had a look at the Khyber Pass. Have you any better idea of the Himalayan range than you had before, Frank ; and are you anxious to make acquaintance with yaks and ponies ? ”

“ Yes, I reply, my dear Harold—a concentrated yes to all your questions, and I'm very much obliged to you for spinning such an interesting yarn.”

CHAPTER IV.

HUNTING, STALKING, AND TRAPPING.



THE members and friends of the F. and M. C. were unanimously of opinion that the annals of the club bid fair to form an interesting volume. "Only," said Uncle Fred, in a confidential interview with his nephews the day after Frank's paper had been read to the interested audience assembled in the drawing-room of The Pines, "it seems to me so far we have had very much mountain and very little forest. *Verbum sap.* Hal, I see you are of my opinion. I only mention this, my dear fellows, because if I give my own experience, you will have to accept another mountain story from me also. Now, let us discover on which of you the honour will come next to be the entertainer of the evening."

The lot fell upon Tom Norton. "My subject is chosen already, uncle," said he, "and my paper partly written. I was awfully afraid I shouldn't be ready if I didn't begin soon enough, I'm such a confoundedly slow writer, you know. When Frank com-

[It was impossible to help smiling at Tom's nonsense.]

Let me picture the scene. The grounds of the paternal mansion have been nightly infested by herds of these noisy and disturbing citizens of the world, whose "voices of the night" are by no means melodious. The innocent baby, the precious little sister, wakes up sobbing and crying piteously, terrified at their fierce and angry tones; and papa, in consequence, gives permission for a hunt. A glorious moonlight night; lights and shadows, in splendid contrast, fill the vast garden. One of our number cautiously, and in ambush behind the pump, awaits the prey. Silence reigns. Hark! a loud hiss, noisy mee-aws, ending in decided caterwauling and quarrelling. He steals back into the house, opens the dining-room door, where the family are assembled, and utters the signal, the call to action—the one word, "Cats!" At that one word, the sons of the house, every sister and every cousin, start up, and dart out into the moonlit garden. Cats fly in every direction at that sudden charge—on walls in the moonbeams, under walls in the shadows, up trees like squirrels, under bushes like hares; and the excited hunters dash and spring and throw their vaunted missiles here, there, and everywhere, their only effect being to cause a swift flight of the game, and to evoke very horrible cries and execrations of boykind in cat language, but never, alas! *never* to catch a cat.

[By this time, all the young folks were laughing merrily, and their elders were by no means backward in following their example.

“But—” expostulated Mr. Meadows at last, trying hard to recover his gravity.]

I beg your pardon, sir, said the lecturer, interruption is strictly forbidden. If the cat-hunts of my boyhood informed me of the indigenous love of hunting in the human species, so also have the maturer sports of later years. Stand with me, if you please, on a delicious September morning, in company with several other sportsmen, at the foot of one of the Grampian mountains in Scotland, as we are prepared for a deer-stalking expedition. Far up, on the sides of several mountains of the range, as if Nature had determined to adorn her giant offspring, the lines and patches of snow lay like chains and brooches of pearl; while below, the same hills were robed in dark purple brown and loveliest green beauty—the heather and the bracken. “There had been seen and reported to me a particularly large and fine-antlered stag, whose branching honours I wished to transfer from the mountain-side to the walls of my own hall.” Our company divided at starting. Donald, my old servant, and myself were determined to go in search of him, “and we resolved to pass the night at a shepherd’s house far up in the hills, if we found that our chase led us too far from home to return the same evening. Long was our walk that

day before we saw horn or hoof; many a likely burn and corrie did we search in vain.....We came in the afternoon to a rocky burn, along the course of which was our line of march. To the left rose an interminable-looking mountain, over the sides of which were scattered a wilderness of gray rock and stone, sometimes forming immense precipices, and in other places degenerating into large tracts of loose and water-worn gray shingle." Donald grew discouraged at the lack of sport, and at the dull, cloudy weather which had succeeded the brightness of the early morning. Then signs of an improvement in this respect appeared. "No symptoms were left of the rain, excepting the drops on the heather, which shone like diamonds in the evening sun." Donald, who had been fishing, at length exclaimed, "Tak' your perspective, sir, and look there," pointing with his chin. "I accordingly took my perspective, as he always called my pocket-telescope, and saw a long line of deer winding from amongst the broken granite in single file down towards us. They kept advancing one after the other, and had a most singular appearance as their line followed the undulations of the ground. They came slowly on (all hinds, not a horn amongst them), till they arrived at a piece of table-land four or five hundred yards from us, when they spread about to feed, occasionally shaking off the rain-drops from their hides, much in the same manner as a dog does on coming out of the water.....We

had but a short distance to stalk. I kept the course of a small stream, which led through the middle of the herd; Donald following me with my gun. We crept up till we reckoned that we must be within an easy shot, and then, looking most cautiously through the crevices and cuts in the bank, I saw that we were in the very centre of the herd: many of the deer were within twenty or thirty yards, and all feeding quietly and unconscious of any danger. Amongst the nearest to me was a remarkably large hind, which we had before observed as being the leader and biggest of the herd. I made a sign to Donald that I would shoot her, and left him to take what he liked of the flock after I fired. Taking a deliberate and cool aim at her shoulder, I pulled the trigger; but, alas! the wet had got between the cap and nipple-end. All that followed was a harmless snap. The deer heard it, and starting from their food rushed together in a confused heap, as if to give Donald a fair chance at the entire flock—a kind of shot he rather rejoiced in. Before I could get a dry cap on my gun, snap, snap went both his barrels; and when I looked up, it was but to see the whole herd quietly trotting up the hill, out of shot, but apparently not very much frightened, as they had not seen us or found out exactly where the sound came from.

“‘We are just twa fules, begging your honour’s pardon, and only fit to weave hose by the ingle,’ said Donald.

"I could not contradict him. The mischief was done; so we had nothing for it but to wipe out our guns as well as we could, and proceed on our wandering. We followed the probable line of the deer's march, and before night saw them in a distant valley feeding again quite unconcernedly.

"'Hark! what is that?' said I, as a hollow roar like that of an angry bull was heard not far from us.

"'Kep down, kep down,' said Donald, suiting the action to the word, and pressing me down with his hand; 'it's just a big staig.'

"All the hinds looked up; and following the direction of their heads, we saw an immense hart coming over the brow of the hill three hundred yards from us.....On the height of the hill he halted, and stretching out his neck and lowering his head, bellowed again. He then rushed down the hill like a mad beast. When half-way down, he was answered from a distance by another stag.....Presently he was answered by another and another stag, and the whole distance seemed alive with them. A more unearthly noise I never heard, as it echoed and re-echoed through the rocky glens that surrounded us.....Indeed, it is very seldom that chances combine to enable a deer-stalker to look quietly on such a strange meeting of deer as we had witnessed that evening. But night was coming on, and though the moon was clear and full, we did not like to start off for the shepherd's house, through the swamps and swollen burns among

which we should have had to pass ; nor did we forget that our road would be through the valley where all this congregation of deer were."

We cooked the trout Donald had caught for supper, making our fire out of sight of the deer; and in a snug corner of the rocks, wrapped in our plaids and covered with heather, we arranged ourselves to sleep. "Several times during the night I got up and listened to the wild bellowing of the deer. Sometimes it sounded close to us, and at other times far away. To an unaccustomed ear it might easily have passed for the roaring of a host of much more dangerous wild beasts, so loud and hollow did it sound.....The deer next morning had moved from the valley where we had left them the previous evening; but Donald, who knew every mountain and glen in the country, having ascertained exactly the way the wind came from, led me off in an easterly direction. The sun was well up when we came towards the summit of a hill from which he expected to see the herd, and his anticipations proved to be correct. On looking carefully down into the extended valley below us, we saw the whole of them. They had apparently finished feeding, and were retiring to rest on a hill-side which faced the morning sun. The hinds were in a compact body; while the largest hart kept a little to their rear, and constantly employed himself in keeping off a number of smaller stags who were moving about..... I saw no chance of getting near the big antlered

leader, though one of the smaller stags could easily have been shot. After consulting with Donald, I sent him to make a large circuit, and when he got quite round, then he was to show himself in the distance to the deer. We reckoned on their leaving the glen by a particular pass, close to which I stationed myself. I kept both gun and rifle with me. From my position, though I could not see Donald, I had a good view of the deer. After waiting for nearly an hour, I saw one of the smaller stags suddenly stop in his rounds, and having gazed for a moment or two in the direction in which I knew Donald was, he trotted nearer to the hinds, still, however, halting occasionally, and turning an anxious glance down the valley. I saw by his manner that he had not quite made up his mind as to whether there was an enemy at hand, not having got the wind of Donald, but probably having caught a glimpse of some part of his cap or dress. The stag then stood motionless on a small hillock, with his head turned towards the suspected quarter, though none of his rivals took any notice of him. The hinds, one and all, kept a most anxious watch on his movements, evidently aware that he suspected some danger. In the meantime Donald seemed to have got a little more to windward of the deer. Presently one old hind got up and snuffed the air, then another and another, till all were on their legs. Still they were not decided as to the danger. At last a general panic seemed to seize the



THE HERD OF DEER.

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hinds, and they all trotted together a short way up the hill. The large stag had got up also, but seemed not at all disposed to make off. The hinds came to a halt near the top of the first slope of the hill, and were joined immediately by about a dozen stags, who, collecting together, galloped up the hill to join them. This seemed to arouse the old fellow, and he trotted up after them. The hinds only waited for his joining them, and then the whole herd set off towards my pass. They had to cross a trifling hollow, during which time I lost sight of them. When they emerged, their order had quite changed. First of all came eight stags in a body, jostling each other as they hurried up through the narrow passes of the rocks. Then came the whole lot of hinds, mostly in single file, but breaking into confused flocks as they passed over pieces of heather and open ground. Next to them came the object of our manoeuvres, and at a small distance behind him the rest of the stags, four or five in number. On they came, sometimes in full view, and sometimes half concealed from me. Donald, too, now showed himself, waving his plaid. The hindmost deer halted on seeing him, and then rushed on to the main herd, who now all got into rare confusion as they hurried on to the pass through which they left the glen. The foremost stags were now passing one by one within forty yards of me. Just at that point they had to make a spring over a kind of chasm in their road. I kept quite motionless, and

they did not observe me, half concealed as I was amongst the gray rocks. Now came the hinds, with a noise like a rushing stream. Amongst them were four or five stags. They were trotting quickly past me, when an unlucky hind caught sight of my rifle-barrel as a ray of the sun fell upon it. The rest of the herd took the alarm from her manner, and they all rushed through the pass in the most mad confusion. The difficult part was only a few yards in length, and once through this, they got into regular order again. But where is their lord and leader? I was afraid to look over my ambuscade for fear of turning him. Just as I was about to do so, however, I heard his step on the stones, and the next moment he was in full view, passing broadside to me, but going slowly, and undecided whether to proceed or turn back, having perceived the panic of the rest of the flock. When he came to the difficult point where the rest had leaped, he halted for a moment, looking round. The next moment my rifle-ball passed through the top of his shoulder, just too high. The blow, however, knocked him down, and before he was up I had my gun in my hand. The poor brute rose, and looked wildly round. Not knowing where the enemy was, nor which way to go, he stood still, looking with anxious glance at his companions, who were galloping off up an opposite slope. Expecting him to drop dead every moment, I did not pull the trigger, but kept my aim on him. The way the rest had gone seemed

too rough for him; and after standing for a minute gazing after them, he turned round, with the intention probably of going down the hill to some well-known burn where he had been in the habit of bathing and cooling his limbs. He twice fell on his knees before he had gone five yards, and then walked slowly away. I thought he might recover strength, and taking a deliberate aim, I fired. This time he fell without a struggle, perfectly dead."

["O Tom! how *could* you? Poor, poor stag!" cried little Elsie, almost in tears.

"Hush, Elsie!" whispered Fanny Norton; "he's only pretending, dear. Tom wouldn't be cruel."

Mr. Thomas Norton gave a half-amused, half-tender glance at his little cousin, and continued his lecture:—]

"Donald joined me by the time I had bled him, and examined the shot-marks. One had broken the very top of his shoulder, but just missed the large arteries. The other ball seemed to have passed through his heart. Donald was vastly delighted at our getting the stag we had determined on, but his enjoyment was somewhat damped by my not having sent both barrels into the middle of the hinds."

But it was enough for me that the stag was dead. I cannot kill one of these noble creatures without an unsportsmanlike but strong twinge of conscience, or emotion, or sympathy, or some kindred feeling. The walls of the dining-room of the hotel where I take

up my abode when I visit Dunkeld are appropriately adorned with almost a dozen stags' heads, with their splendid branching antlers. I can never look up at them, those mildly dignified faces and gentle brown eyes, without an idea that there is sad reproach in their expression towards me as a murderer of their race.

Harts shed their horns annually, a truly wonderful circumstance if we consider that the horn is an actual continuation of the bone of the table of the skull, as the velvet or skin is of the integuments of the head. Nor is the rapidity with which this firm mass of bone is secreted less worthy of our admiration. After the old horns are shed, the new appear in ten days, and attain their full growth (immense as that often is) in three months. The age of the hart may be told from an examination of its horns, until it has passed its sixth year. A magnificent pair of horns is said to be still preserved, containing each thirty-three antlers, that belonged to a stag killed by the first king of Prussia. The process of shedding seldom comes under observation, even of the foresters. Here is an account of one instance. Whilst a hart was browsing, one of his antlers was seen to incline leisurely to one side, and immediately to fall to the ground. The stag tossed up his head as if in surprise, and began to shake it pretty violently, when the remaining antler was discarded also, and fell some distance from him. Relieved from their weight, he expressed his

sense of buoyancy by bounding high from the ground, as if in sport, and then tossing his bare head, dashed away in a confused and rapid manner. It is a remarkable fact that few of the horns thus cast away are found. The hinds have been seen to eat them, but it is scarcely conceivable that all the horns shed every year can be thus disposed of. The velvet before mentioned is a thick, leaden-coloured skin covering the new horns. When this begins to peel off, the hart is in good condition for the table and for the hunt. Such deer as have three points at the upper extremity of their horns are called royal."

If any of my hearers wish to know whether they are peculiarly fitted for deer-stalking in the Scottish mountains, let them test themselves by the following qualifications:—"Your consummate deer-stalker should not only be able to run like an antelope, and breathe like the trade-winds, but to run in a stooping position at a greyhound pace, with his back parallel to the ground and his face within an inch of it, for a mile together. He should take a singular pleasure in threading the seams of a bog, or in gliding down a burn like an eel. Strong and pliant in the ankle he should indubitably be, since in running swiftly down precipices, picturesquely adorned with sharp-edged, angular, vindictive stones, his feet will get into awkward cavities: if his legs are devoid of the faculty of breaking, so much the better. He should rejoice in wading through torrents, and be able to stand firmly on

water-worn stones, unconscious of the action of the current; or if the waves be too powerful for him, when he loses his balance, and goes floating away on his back (for if he has any tact or sense of the picturesque he will fall backwards), he should raise his rifle aloft in the air, lest his powder get wet. As for sleep, he should be a stranger to it; and if a man gets into the slothful habit of lying in bed for five or six hours at a time, I should be glad to know what he is fit for. Steady, very steady his hand should be, and at times without a pulse. Hyacinthine curls are a very graceful ornament to the head, but I leave it to a deer-stalker's own good sense whether it would not be infinitely better for him to shave his crown at once than to risk the loss of a single shot during the season. As to mental endowments, he should have the qualifications of a Ulysses and a Philidor combined,—wary and circumspect, never going rashly to work, but surveying all his ground like an experienced general before he commences operations; patient under suspense and disappointment; fertile in conception, and rapid and decisive in execution. He must be brave to attempt; he must have fortitude to suffer. What more can be required for the greatest undertakings?"

[The audience assembled at the bidding of the F. and M. C. were much amused at this elaborate description of a deer-stalker's qualifications.]

The lecturer continued:—Leaving the shores of

Britain, I plunge into the forests of the New World, and bidding good-bye to the Scotch deer-stalker upon the mountains, beg to introduce you to an Indian trapper as he starts into the forests of the North-West of North America to ensnare his fur-bearing animals. "Of all furs, with the single exception of the sea-otter, which is found only on the Pacific coast, the silver fox commands the highest price. The fur of the silver fox is of a beautiful gray; the white hairs, which predominate, being tipped with black, and mixed with others of pure black. A well-matched pair of silver-fox-skins are worth from £80 to £100. The cross-foxes—so called from the dark stripe down the back, with a cross over the shoulders, like that on a donkey—vary in every degree between the silver and the common red fox, and the value of their skins varies in the same ratio. After the cross-foxes come the fisher, the marten, and the mink." The otter, the black bear, and the lynx are also trapped. "The ermine is exceedingly common here, and is a nuisance to the trapper, destroying the baits set for the marten and the fisher. It is generally considered of too little value to be the object of the trapper's pursuit.....At the beginning of November, when the animals have got their winter coats, and fur is 'in season,' the trapper prepares his pack, which he makes in the following manner: Folding his blanket double, he places in it a lump of pemmican,"—and as it is quite possible some present may

not know what pemmican is, I will enlighten them. It is prepared in the following manner: "The meat (whether of ox or of buffalo) having been dried in the sun, or over a fire, in thin flakes, is placed in a dressed buffalo-skin, and pounded with a flail until it is reduced to small fragments and powder. The fat of the animal is at the same time melted down. The pounded meat is then put into bags of buffalo-hide, and the boiling grease poured on to it. The mass is well stirred and mixed together, and on cooling becomes as solid as linseed cake. Although we found pemmican decidedly unpalatable at first, tasting remarkably like a mixture of chips and tallow, we became very partial to it after a time. A finer kind of pemmican is made by using only marrow and soft fat, leaving out the tallow, and sometimes adding berries of different kinds, and some sugar. The berry pemmican is much prized, and very difficult to get hold of, and is really capital eating."

[Some sounds of very decided disgust came from the young ladies of his audience during this portion of the lecturer's discourse. He smiled grimly, as if he enjoyed their horror of the compound whose preparation he had described, but he made no comment.]

The trapper's lump of pemmican is "sufficient for five or six days' consumption." In addition, he has "a tin kettle and cup, and, if he is rich, some steel traps, and a little tea and salt. The blanket is then

tied at the four corners, and slung on the back by a band across the chest. A gun and ammunition, an axe, a knife, and a fire-bag complete his equipment. Tying on a pair of snow-shoes, he starts alone into the gloomy woods, trudging silently forward; for the hunter or the trapper can never lighten the solitude of his journey by whistling or a song. His keen eye scans every mark upon the snow for the tracks he seeks. When he observes the footprints of marten or of fisher, he unslings his pack and sets to work to construct a 'dead fall' or wooden trap after the following manner:—Having cut down a number of saplings, these are divided into stakes of about a yard in length, which are driven into the ground so as to form a palisade, in the shape of half an oval, cut transversely. Across the entrance to this little enclosure, which is of a length to admit about two-thirds of the animal's body, and too narrow to admit of its fairly entering in and turning round, a short log is laid. A tree of considerable size is next felled, denuded of its branches, and so laid that it rests upon the log at the entrance in a parallel direction. The bait, which is generally a bit of tough, dried meat, or a piece of partridge or of squirrel, is placed on the point of a short stick. This is projected horizontally into the enclosure; and on the external end of it rests another short stick, placed perpendicularly, which supports the large tree laid across the entrance. The top of the trap is then covered in with bark and

branches, so that the only means of access to the bait is by the opening between the propped-up tree and the log beneath. When the bait is seized, the tree falls down upon the animal and crushes him to death. An expert trapper will make forty or fifty traps in one day. The steel traps resemble our ordinary rat-traps, but have no teeth, and the springs are double. In the large traps used for beavers, foxes, and wolves, the springs have to be made so powerful that it requires all the force of a strong man to set them. They are placed in the snow, and carefully covered over; fragments of meat are scattered about, and the place smoothed down, so as to leave no trace. To the trap is attached a chain, with a ring at the free extremity, through which a stout stake is passed, and left otherwise unattached. When an animal is caught—generally by the leg as he digs in the snow for the hidden morsels—he carries off the trap for a short distance, but is soon brought up by the stake getting entangled across the trees and fallen timber, and is rarely able to travel any great distance before being discovered by the trapper."

But while the trapper is thus overreaching and cunningly inveigling some of the denizens of the forest, he finds himself often daringly outwitted and circumvented by a four-footed enemy, "the North American glutton, or, as he is commonly called, the wolverine or carcajou." I recommend you to take your choice of these mellifluous names. "This curious

animal is rather larger than an English fox, with a long body, stoutly and compactly made, mounted on exceedingly short legs of great strength. His broad feet are armed with powerful claws, and his track in the snow is as large as the print of a man's fist. The shape of his head and his hairy coat give him very much the appearance of a shaggy brown dog. During the winter months he avails himself of the labours of the trapper; and such serious injuries does he inflict, that he has received from the Indians the name of *Kekwaharkess*, or 'the evil one.' With untiring perseverance, he hunts day and night for the trail of man; and when it is found, he follows it unerringly. When he comes to a lake, where the track is generally drifted over, he continues his untiring gallop round its borders, to discover the point at which it again enters the woods; and again follows it, until he arrives at one of the wooden traps. Avoiding the door, he speedily tears open an entrance at the back, and seizes the bait with impunity; or, if the trap contains an animal, he drags it out, and, with wanton malevolence, mauls it, and hides it at some distance in the underwood, or at the top of some lofty pine: occasionally, when hard pressed by hunger, he devours it. In this manner he demolishes the whole series of traps; and when once a wolverine has established himself on a trapping walk, the hunter's only chance for success is to change ground and build a fresh lot of traps, trusting to secure a

few furs before the new path is found out by his industrious enemy." I have come to the conclusion, that as a trapper, a wolverine would not awaken very amiable feelings in me. "The trappers believe him to possess a wisdom almost human. He is never caught by the ordinary 'dead fall.' Occasionally one is poisoned, or caught in a steel trap; but his strength is so great that many traps, strong enough to hold securely a large wolf, will not retain the wolverine. When caught in this way, he does not, like the fox and the mink, proceed to amputate the limb; but, assisting to carry the trap with his mouth, he makes all haste to reach a lake or a river, where he can hasten forward at speed, unobstructed by trees or by fallen wood. After travelling far enough to be tolerably safe from pursuit for a time, he devotes himself to the extrication of the imprisoned limb, in which he not unfrequently succeeds. The wolverine is also sometimes killed by a gun, placed bearing on a bait, to which is attached a string communicating with the trigger." But, on the authority of an Indian, "the carcajou has been too cunning to be thus caught; instead of which, first approaching the gun and gnawing in two the cord communicating with the trigger, he securely devoured the bait;" which I put on record as one of the most delightfully *cool* achievements ever performed by man or by beast. The same Indian had yet another story of the animal.

"In one instance when every device to deceive

his persecutor had been at once seen through, and utterly futile, the trapper adopted the plan of placing the gun in a tree, with the muzzle pointing vertically downwards upon the bait. This was suspended from a branch at such a height that the animal could not reach it without jumping. The gun was fastened high up in the tree, completely screened from view by the branches. Now, the wolverine is an animal troubled with exceeding curiosity. He investigates everything; an old moccasin thrown aside in the bushes or a knife lost in the snow is ferreted out and examined, and anything suspended almost out of reach generally offers an irresistible temptation. But in this case the carcajou restrained his curiosity and hunger for the time; climbed the tree, cut the cords which bound the gun, which thus tumbled harmless to the ground, and then descending, secured the bait without danger."

There is something strangely attractive in the life of a trapper, in spite of the fatigues and hardships which attend it. The long, laborious march, loaded with a heavy pack and cumbered with a quantity of thick clothing, through snow and woods beset with fallen timber and underwood, is fatiguing enough. "The only change is the work of making the traps, or the rest at night in camp. Provisions usually fall short, and the trapper subsists, in great measure, upon the flesh of the animals captured to obtain the fur. But, on the other hand, the grand beauty of

This is impeded by the stiff sole of an ordinary boot. The muscles of an Indian's foot are so developed that it appears plump and chubby as that of a child.....

"Hitherto no wolverine had annoyed us, and we succeeded in accumulating a nice collection of furs. But at last, when starting to visit our walk, we observed the tracks of one of very large size, which had followed our trail, and our guide, *La Ronde* the trapper, at once declared, '*C'est fini, monsieur; il a cassé toutes nos trappes; vous allez voir;*' and sure enough, as we came to each in succession, we found it broken open at the back, the bait taken, and where an animal had been caught, it was carried off. Throughout the whole line every one had been demolished, and we discovered the tails of no less than ten martens, the bodies of which had apparently been devoured by the hungry and successful *carcajou*. We had on a former occasion suspended small poisoned baits, wrapped in old moccasins or other covering, on the bushes at different points. One of these the wolverine had pulled down, unwrapped it, and bitten the bait in two. Terrified at the discovery that it was poisoned, he had rushed away at full speed from the dangerous temptation. It was useless to set the traps again, and we therefore returned home disconsolate, *La Ronde* cursing with all his might the *carcajou*."

Before I bid adieu to the trappers, let me record a noble instance of honesty and self-denial, which re-

dounds to the credit of these sons of the forest. When "Dr. Cheadle sat over the fire one evening alone, in somewhat dismal mood, being lamed by the use of snow-shoes, the door opened, and in walked a French half-breed of very Indian appearance. He sat down, and smoked, and talked for an hour or two, stating that he was out trapping, and that his lodge and family were about five miles distant. In due time Dr. Cheadle produced some pemmican for supper, when the visitor fully justified the sobriquet which he bore, of Mahaygun, or 'The Wolf,' by eating most voraciously. He then mentioned that he had not tasted food for two days. He had visited the hut the day before, lit a fire, melted some snow in the kettle, and waited for a long time in the hope that some one might come in. At last he went away without touching the pemmican which lay upon the table ready to his hand. The story was, doubtless, perfectly true, agreeing with all the signs previously observed, and the fact that the pemmican was uncut. With the pangs of hunger gnawing at his stomach, and viewing, no doubt with longing eyes, the food around, he had yet, according to Indian etiquette, refrained from clamouring at once for food, but sat and smoked for a long time without making the slightest allusion to his starving condition. When in due course his host offered him something to eat, he mentioned the wants of himself and family. The next day he left, carrying with him supplies for his squaw.

He was exceedingly grateful for the assistance, and promised to return in a day with his wife, who should wash and mend all the clothes as some acknowledgment of the kindness."

I am very much afraid that I, Thomas Norton, although enjoying the advantages of a Christian civilization, good relations, and the sound instruction imparted at Hornby Hall, should not have been able to equal the magnificent honesty of the half-breed of North-West America; but my teeth would have met in the stranger's pemmican, and, *nolens volens*, he would have had to submit to the ravages of a hungry youth.

But now you must allow me to say again, as the poet says in his fine dramatic representation of the life of Mary Queen of Scots, "The scene is changed." We are back once more in Europe, and on the shores of Brittany, that part of France which is so closely connected with our own dear old island; for it was settled by the same hardy Celtic race, the ancient Britons, who were driven by the Roman invasion, some into Wales, some into Cornwall, and some into this land of Armorica or Brittany. Wolves still infest the forests of Duault and Huelgoat, as they used to infest our own now more highly favoured island, and a price is laid upon every wolf's head, and paid to the slayer who shall bring it to the *mairie*, or mayor's official residence—thirty francs for a he-wolf, and fifty for a she-wolf. They are cowardly beasts, and attack the dwellings of the poor on the outskirts of the

forests, breaking through the broom roofs, which offer but a miserable defence, and seizing the domestic animals that are accustomed to share the family dwelling.

“ Any one wishing to see the Celtic population of Lower Brittany in its rude simplicity, natural, wild, and unchanged as it is by the rude varnish of modern civilization, should go to a wolf-hunt. The peasant's blood is then up, and both in garb and action he fairly represents the appearance and character of our ancient forefathers as described by Tacitus and later authors. Clad as far as his waist in a shaggy goat-skin mantle; his nether limbs encased in the coarsest sackcloth, quaintly fashioned in the form of spacious ‘bragues,’ or tight-fitting to the legs; his feet stockingless, but protected by huge beechen sabots well stuffed with straw; and his long curly locks, which apparently have never been violated either by scissors or comb, falling wildly over his back and shoulders, he presents the appearance of a veritable ancient Briton, such as that individual might be supposed to have been before the period of the Saxon heptarchy. Then see him in chase, his weapon a club or a pike, if he is not rich enough to possess a gun, and his game the wolf. He is then the ‘noble savage’ all over; his passion is roused, and the hunting instinct natural to man blazes out in him uncontrollably, and converts at once the peaceable Breton peasant into the similitude of a wild Huron or a Crowfoot Indian. His

cries of 'A'hr bleiz! a'hr bleiz!' when the wolf is afoot, are almost unearthly, his object being doubtless to cheer the hounds and terrify the wolf; but that he should be more successful in the latter than the former result may be gathered from the tone of execration, very bitter and very unmusical, that accompanies every shout. He grinds it out as it were through his teeth, and the sound of 'A'hr bleiz! a'hr bleiz!' ringing through the woods is enough to terrify the stoutest wolf; and if a stranger hear the yell, it will remain impressed on his memory for many a future day."

The dwellings of these peasants of the forests of Brittany are very poor. "The cabin is built of mud or of stone, and thatched with broom; a small aperture is left in the upper part of the door to admit air and light; while, on the fire being kindled, the smoke oozes out as it can through all parts of the roof, and the whole cabin resembles at a distance a huge charcoal heap in an active state of combustion. In nooks of the wall, as high up as the building will admit, rude berths are constructed, which serve the purpose of beds, the means of access to which, from their lofty position and square, contracted entrance, rather resemble the contrivance of a jackdaw's brain than that of a human being." But wretched as are these abodes, they are dear to the Bretons, who endeavour, by fences and by keeping up fires at night, to guard against the attacks of the wolves.

The office of *louvétier*, or wolf-hunter, is an honourable one in Brittany, and was borne, about twenty-five years ago, by a gentleman called the Count de St. Prix. A peasant one day walked up to this gentleman as he returned from shooting birds, and showed by his manner that he had some tidings of importance. "He walked straight up to the *louvétier*, and lifting his hat respectfully, entreated his immediate help at Trefranc. 'For,' said he, 'the wolves are eating us up there. Two days ago they killed my cow by daylight; and last evening they seized my horse by the gullet, and would have killed him in half a minute, if I had not rushed to his rescue and scared the brutes away. As it is, they have stripped his skin down from the throat to the chest. So, pray, monsieur, don't delay.' St. Prix at once slipped a five-franc piece into his hand, and gladdened the poor fellow's heart further by saying, 'To-morrow morning my hounds shall be at Trefranc Rocks at eight o'clock, and if the *loup-garou* (demon wolf) is roused, let him look to his skin.'

No sooner had this arrangement been made, than away sped the grateful peasant, fast as his heavy sabots would carry him, to communicate the glad news to the surrounding hamlets. Not commonly, however, does the *louvétier* communicate the meet of the wolf-hounds to the peasantry at large; it is only when a wolf or a litter of wolves become exceptionally bold and destructive that he proclaims the

war-note aloud, and the whole country is gathered together, far and near, to avenge the havoc and check its further progress. On such occasions, as may be supposed, the beauty of the chase is sadly marred by the hubbub and confusion accompanying the hounds on every side; the danger, too, from the whistling slugs and wild use of their musketry by the peasantry is often serious, and St. Prix is sometimes sorely tried by his motley and unruly crowd.

"It was a glorious hunting morning, the day they met at Trefranc. No gossamer glittered on the grass, no 'spangles decked the thorn;' but the soft west wind blew freshly over the heath, the clouds were high, and all betokened steady weather and good scent." Some little anxiety was expressed by the louvetier and his friends regarding the careless shooting of the peasantry, and the English stranger amongst them was advised to follow the hounds closely as the safest plan. The Count de St. Prix "had scarcely done speaking, when Louis Trevarreg, the trustiest of his *piqueurs*, or whippers-in, advanced rapidly from the cover-side, leading old Tonnerre, the famous *limier*, in a leash; and lifting his hat respectfully, Louis informed us that he had tracked in a couple of old wolves where they had crossed the brook in the northern valley; that Tonnerre had nearly dragged his arm off in his eagerness to follow the trail; and that, on laying on the pack, he ventured to say they would rouse them in less than half an hour.

"‘I knew there must be more than one wolf at Trefranc,’ said St. Prix, ‘to have done so much mischief. The cowardly brutes rarely commit wholesale murder single-handed.’

"The pack, consisting this day of not more than twelve couple, just two-thirds of the lot usually hunted on less dangerous occasions, sat quietly on their haunches on a plot of short heather within a hundred yards of us, but down-wind of the cover we were about to draw. The moment, however, they discovered the louvetier’s voice, vain were the whips and frantic efforts of the piqueurs to prevent their rushing forward to welcome his arrival; and considering they were all in couples, it was a marvel to me that no accident occurred by their fouling the horse’s legs, as they pressed forward tumultuously on every side, and even under his very girths. But St. Prix, who had a caress for one and a kind word for another, was delighted at the demonstration, and took no heed whatever, neither did his horse, of the jingling chains and uproarious action evinced by the hounds.

"‘Let go six couple,’ said St. Prix to the piqueurs, as they rushed up to secure the hounds, ‘and hold the rest in couple till you hear my horn; then if it sounds “Le loup,” slip them all.’

"At first a fox was started, and then St. Prix with prompt decision called back his hounds; for had they settled on the fox, the wolves in all probability would

have slipped away, and our sport been marred for the day. The hunting-horn which the louvetier wore at his shoulder was useful and picturesque, but cumbrous. The hounds, with their mouths away from us, were now pointing for a precipitous, rocky ravine, matted with thorny brushwood and the wild clematis, through which it was all but impossible on horseback to force one's way. Twice I was dragged bodily from the saddle to the ground, while my coat was literally torn to tatters on my back; the clematis intertwined with the bushes formed a rope-like rigging as difficult to pass through as the shrouds of a ship, and I longed for a cutlass to hew my way through the provoking growth. St. Prix, however, in his close-fitting hunting-cap and green velveteen attire, still forged ahead, and I could see him between me and the sky-line fighting bravely forward, but, like myself, at some distance astern of the hounds. I was just emerging from a network of clematis, by which I had been nearly strangled, when I caught sight of 'Barbe-Bleu' (the louvetier's horse) jerked back suddenly on his haunches, and St. Prix grasping at his horn; at the same moment, the hounds' heads being turned in my direction, the angrier, sharper tone of their tongues told me at once the wolf was afoot, and they hard at him entering the ravine. Instantly the exciting blast of 'Le loup' rang from the louvetier's horn, and responding to the signal, at least half-a-dozen other horns proclaimed the 'find' from

distant parts of the cover. Then the *relais*, the six couple in hand, were thrown in at the front, till what with hounds, horns, and echoes, the old forest of Trefranc fairly rocked with applause. For a whole hour the hounds appeared glued to their game, driving hard every moment of the time, and carrying a grand head whenever the hollow cover enabled them to do so; but as yet not a wolf had been viewed by one of the field, nor was it known for certain whether a brace or a single wolf was in front of the hounds. However, this doubt was soon dispelled. A long narrow strip of open, short heather lay exactly in the line for which the chase was now pointing, and as the cover in this direction ran, like a peninsula, far out from its main area, whatever the hounds were running was bound to break at the far end, or turn short back, there and then, in the face of them and the mounted field. Simultaneously, and side by side, a brace of grand old wolves now broke over the heather, striding, with an easy long gallop, as evenly together as a pair of well-matched leaders in the old Quicksilver mail-coach. Had they suspected, however, that in escaping from Charybdis they would only be falling into the jaws of Scylla's dogs, no power would have forced them to quit the stronghold of Trefranc. There, at least, if not gorged with flesh, they might have baffled the stoutest hounds in Christendom for many a long day. But this was the down-wind point, and, wary and suspicious as

they ever are, it was simply beyond the compass of their eyes, ears, or nose to discover that fifty peasants or more stood at short intervals on the edge of that cover, each bearing a deadly weapon expressly for their destruction.

"The fusilade at that moment was terrific, but scarcely less deafening than the hue and cry raised by the peasants at sight of their enemy. One wolf fell dead, riddled with slugs; but the other, evidently badly hit, headed back, and either squatting in the brushwood as the hounds flung over him, or shooting past them unviewed, he managed to gain the main cover without further difficulty. The danger of that fusilade was in reality no joke, even to the *chasseurs* that followed the hounds. Two of the peasants fared very badly—one carried his leg as if wounded sorely in that limb, while the other lay on his side in the heather, groaning aloud in his agony. A crowd had collected round him, eager to help the poor fellow, and equally anxious, each one of them, to shift the imputation of having shot him on any one's shoulders but their own, while all stoutly swore that every slug of their guns would be found in the dead wolf's body." But happily the wound of the slug, though an ugly gash, was not dangerous, and the wounded man was cheered by the assurance that he would be all right again in a few days.

"For one hour, over the fallen foe a fanfare of horns proclaimed the victory far and wide, while the

hounds every now and then took a savage grip at the gaunt brute's throat, and bayed a wild response to the joyous notes. It was evidently St. Prix's object to rest his hounds, otherwise he must have paid readier attention to the entreaties of the peasants and gone at once in pursuit of the other wounded wolf; besides, fearing perhaps the damage his hounds might receive in their encounter with that formidable antagonist, he purposely delayed proceedings, hoping the wolf might bleed to death ere the hounds closed with him in some unapproachable ravine of that great cover. If such were his reasons, he was doubtless right in his dilatory tactics, though I confess I fully shared the impatience loudly expressed by the excited peasants.

"The hounds, at last clapped on to the scent of the wounded wolf, soon settled to it, and to judge by the crash that followed, it might be supposed he was not a minute ahead of them.

"'That's his blood they're enjoying,' said St. Prix to me, as he listened with intense delight to the rattling peal; 'the faster it trickles the better the scent, and, above all, the easier will be the victory to the hounds in the last fight.'

"'Then it will be soon over,' I remarked, hearing the pack driving desperately. 'If badly hit, he can't last long at that pace.'

"'He is an hour ahead of them,' rejoined St. Prix, 'and will keep going so long as life lasts.'

"We now rode to head the chase, safe, at least for a time, from the random shots of the peasants, many of whom still lingered behind, feasting their eyes on the carcass of the fallen wolf, while the remainder straggled on unposted in the rear of the hounds. But ever, as we reached the far side of this great cover, the wolf, shirking the edge of it, doubled back for its innermost depths, and again and again threw us out, and baffled St. Prix's hope of being able to help his hounds with his *couteau de chasse* (hunting-knife) in the last savage struggle. An accident now occurred to my friend Kergoorlas, that I greatly marvel did not end more seriously. His horse put his fore-legs into a badger's earth, and almost turned a somersault on his rider. The latter, however, fell on a heap of soft, newly-excavated earth, and escaped with only a few bruises. I was hastening towards him with the view of rendering all the assistance in my power, when I heard the hounds throw up and the cry suddenly cease, and at once all was quiet as the lull after a raging storm. St. Prix's head, about a hundred yards in front of us, was still visible above the scrub; and with that for our guide, we forced our way as best we could towards the heart of the cover. Before, however, we could reach the very spot, the angry growl of the hounds worrying the wolf fell on our ears. Then came the fighting, tearing, and death-struggle of the powerful brute, and with it the occasional shrieking howl of a hound, lamed or maimed

for life. It was barely half a minute after our arrival ere St. Prix, having lashed Barbe-Bleu at a safe distance, joined the fray. In he went into the thick of it, his right hand aloft, and his *couteau* flashing in the sun. One stroke—quick as lightning it need be—struck the wolf to the heart, and he fell a lifeless carcass among the exulting hounds.

“After many a fanfare on his and Keryfan’s horns, the peasants crowded in from every point; and Hercules, returning from the capture of the wild boar of Erymanthus, could never have received a heartier ovation from the inhabitants of that country than St. Prix from the wild Breton peasants of this district. He was their deliverer from the scourge that devastated their little flocks, and brought their grim poverty to its last pinch; and to him they were according their hero-worship with a truly grateful heart.

“The next day we visited the hounds, which were quartered in a peasant’s cottage, every part of which they occupied without an article of the scanty furniture having been removed. Grievously marked about the head and neck were several of them in that last worry at Trefranc; while a couple or two came limping along on three legs to meet and welcome the louvetier as he entered the grimy hovel in which they were confined. One old hound, a grand specimen of the St. Hubert breed, standing twenty-six inches at the shoulder, rose leisurely from

the bed-recess, and exhibited a face covered with scars: a recent ugly one, extending to his cheek-bone from his nose, added dignity, if it did not otherwise improve his look; while countless old seams about his neck and head reminded me of that ancient warrior, Curius Dentatus, whose body bore the marks of a hundred wounds, and all in front. He was well named 'Cæsar,' for he looked like an emperor and a conqueror from stem to stern.

"St. Prix's remedies were simple enough—a bucket of water and a sponge being the sole appliance for all wounds, except indeed where the sores had generated proud-flesh. If a wound, however, was within reach of a hound's tongue, he never troubled it with artificial treatment, well knowing the all-healing power given by nature to that member. Half-a-dozen hounds had submitted very quietly to the sponge and water process, when it became old 'Cæsar's' turn to undergo the same ordeal. I could see at a glance, however, that he was a hound not to be handled by a novice, and that even the experienced piqueur would gladly have deferred the operation, if his master had not been present to insist on its performance. 'Cæsar,' said St. Prix very distinctly, as he ran the thong through the keeper of his whip, and drew the loop tightly round the hound's neck — 'Cæsar, ici, mon enfant,' and out stalked the grand old hound, slowly and reluctantly, towards the bucket in front of the door. Two or

three deep growls and a few spasmodic twitches indicated but too plainly that he was in no humour to be handled with impunity; so, while St. Prix held him firmly by the head, Louis Trevarreg threw his right leg over the hound's shoulders, and grasping them with both knees, fixed him as in a vice, and at once proceeded to wash out the wound without further danger. But the storm that had been brewing now burst forth with a roar of thunder from the hound's tongue and flashes of lightning from his angry eyes, and it was quite work enough for the two powerful men to hold him securely to the end of the operation. The moment, however, the fine old fellow was liberated, he came up to St. Prix flourishing his tail good-naturedly; as if he meant to apologize for the trouble he had given and the uproar he had made under his hands."

I believe I have now, said the lecturer, looking round him with a smile, occupied as much of your valuable time as my predecessors in entertaining you; but I will not pretend, through any mock modesty, to have by any means exhausted my material or my subjects. On the contrary, I have two stories more which I can highly recommend—one especially for my fair listeners, and the other for those to whom deeds of daring are ever welcome. Like many other people under similar circumstances, and notably like the great Roman orator, "I pause for a reply."

["Oh, bravo, Tom!" said Hal. "Proceed!"]

"Proceed!" was echoed from the lips of the other boys; and the clapping of white hands, and the deep-toned "Hear, hear" of the gentlemen encouraged the lecturer to resume his narrative.]

I am not at all sure, he began, that much sympathy has been felt for the hunted wolf, even by the tenderest hearted of my listeners; but should such a sentiment have influenced her, I hope she will have still more pity for poor little Marie, a very small peasant girl, who encountered the danger which I shall attempt to describe for you. "The poor little trot, only six years old, had been left by her parents, as is the common practice of that country, to take charge of a small black sheep, which her mere presence was supposed to protect from the attack of wolves frequenting the adjoining forest. It is the universal belief in Brittany that these beasts will not attack a human being, however young or defenceless. The plot of enclosed ground in which Marie was stationed was so overgrown with old broom that a score of Brittany bullocks might have wandered unseen beneath its topmost twigs; while here and there, from the densest portion of it, appeared sundry ominous track-ways, worn by wolves in their passage to and from the neighbouring cover. The parents of the child, well aware of these signs and the proximity of those dangerous robbers, yet never for one moment entertained a doubt either as to her safety

or that of her charge; and great indeed were their dismay and agony on finding, ere the sun went down, that no trace of either, beyond a few scattered bunches of wool, could be discovered in that or in the adjoining fields. Tracks there were, however, in the soil, deep and recent, of the presence of a huge wolf close to the bank near which the child and sheep were last seen; but beyond the wool no other vestige was left to indicate the too probable fate of both.

"Still the belief of the peasantry in the inviolability of the human person by a wolf remained strong and unshaken; and large parties, aided by the gendarmes of the district, banded themselves together, and searched diligently for many days and even weeks in the forest of Huelgoat and the broom-fields around. Fires, too, were lighted in lone spots, and kept burning throughout the night, in the hope of attracting the little wanderer's attention, and rescuing her, if alive, from the starvation to which she must otherwise succumb. But all efforts proved unsuccessful, till at length hope became extinguished in the hearts of all save those of the parents. Some peasants indeed, in their superstition, came to the conclusion that the footprints in the mud were those of the loup-garou, and that the demon-wolf had carried off the child. Others thought that, had no such fate overtaken her, the sight of the wolf had probably scared her from the spot; that she had then

wandered into the forest, and died there from hunger and exposure. This opinion, after a while, seemed to be generally accepted, and further search for the poor child was abandoned by the public as hopeless and unavailing.

"The parents, however, parent-like, still clung to the belief that their little Marie was not lost to them for ever, and for many a weary day they threaded the deepest nooks of Huelgoat, returning only at late eve, when the howling of the wolves was the sole sound that fell on their anxious ears, and the pale stars the sole light to guide them on their lonesome path. Nightly, too, they burned a resin-candle in the one small window of their cabin, trusting it might prove a beacon to guide the little wanderer home. Six weeks or more had elapsed, and hope with all was at its lowest ebb, when a charcoal-burner, following his lonely avocation in the heart of the forest, was startled by the apparition of a child timidly approaching his hut. This, of course, was little Marie, but exposure and want of food had almost converted her into a living skeleton. Her face begrimed with dirt and blackberry juice, and her hair matted with particles of moss and other lichens, her head looked more like a bird's nest than like the head of a human being; she was half clad, too, and wild in manner as any fawn of the forest. It is no wonder, then, the simple peasant stared again and again before he could be assured it was a real child that crept into

the darkest corner of his hut, too timid to speak, and yet pinched by hunger even to death's door!

"A moment's thought, however, convinced him that this must be the lost child respecting whom the gendarmes and others had already paid him sundry visits; and being of a kindly nature, the man, when he had fed her bountifully with his black buckwheat bread and washed her face, lifted her on his broad shoulders and carried her directly home to the cabin of her parents. Marie's eventful history was soon told. She had left the broom-field in search of blackberries, and on returning to her charge was just in time to see a huge wolf jump the bank, with the little sheep struggling in its jaws. The beast at once entered the forest, and Marie, crying and screaming, and hoping to scare it from its prey, followed on until she soon became lost in its mazes, and found it utterly impossible to retrace her steps, or distinguish even the direction of her parents' home. Her sole food had been beech-nuts, blackberries, and a few chestnuts; and although sleeping nightly in the very presence of wolves, she had never been disturbed for a moment by a sight of the ravenous brutes."

Sport in Brittany includes boar-hunting as well as wolf-hunting, and appeals are made to the *loutier* to bring his hounds to bear upon these animals, which are scarcely less destructive to the property of the peasants and small farmers, though

in this case it is by eating their vegetable produce, and trampling the corn, and demolishing the chestnuts. For many days the hunt continues, especially when many boars are known to be in the neighbourhood. Here is the description of the second day's sport on one occasion :—

“The bold appearance of the hounds of M. de Kergoorlas's pack was quite remarkable. Standing twenty-five inches at the shoulder, and carrying their long, feathered tails well arched over their backs, with high crowns, long faces, and silky ears, and above all, with good legs and feet below, they looked all over a working lot, and admirably adapted for the rough game and rough country in which they were bred.....Owing to the serious damage done to their crops, the peasants of the district had taken care to promulgate far and wide the meet of M. de Kergoorlas's hounds at Koenig on that day. Consequently a large gathering of sturdy Celts, yet not a man of them standing more than five feet six inches high, clad in all the variety of costume peculiar to the neighbourhood, converted the usually quiet coverside into a scene strangely picturesque and gay. But for the friendly greetings and pleasant badinage perpetually going on, the crowd, armed as it was with muskets of mighty length and antique form, might have been easily mistaken for a band of insurgents bent on some desperate adventure.”

Kergoorlas, the owner of the pack of hounds,

thus addressed the assembly: "Friends, the boars are plentiful in Koenig, and the hounds eager for the chase. Let me ask you to repair at once to your several posts in the cover; to be careful where you stand; and above all, not to fire when the hounds are in conflict with a boar. The chase will now commence."

Not more instantaneously was Roderick Dhu's wave of the hand obeyed by his hardy clansmen than the signal given by Kergoorlas to his Breton field.

"Already had the piqueurs at break of day ascertained with the lymers that several boars had entered the cover, and that one of unusual size had gone singly to his lair in a pile of rocks overhanging the river." Here I must pause to explain what a lymer or lyme-hound is: "He is so called from the lyam or leash in which he is led, and is, from the nature of his employment, necessarily mute, it being the very aim of employing him to check riot and to keep hounds steady and together on the game which it is the object of the day's *chasse* to pursue. As muteness in a well-bred hound was rarely met with, this indispensable pioneer was always a hybrid, the result of a cross between a hound and a mastiff or a pointer."

"The boar which was reported was, in Louis Trefarreg's opinion, the great boar of Laz, the terror of the peasantry for miles around. The ferocious brute

had probably, he thought, taken alarm at the din of war that had disturbed his 'ancient solitary reign' in that cover, and had shifted his quarters to this stronghold in Koenig; and if so, the piqueur predicted serious danger to men and hounds in forcing him to break away from this granite fortress. However, M. de Kergoorlas did not hesitate a moment; but treating the vaticination as emanating from an over-careful servant, rather than an experienced hunter, he ordered his men to uncouple a lot of old hounds and to clap them at once on the track of the boar. I shouldered my smooth-bore and dashed after the cry. No one who has not followed a deep-mouthed pack of hounds in rocky and woodland glens can form an adequate conception of the grand volume of music produced in such places by the united choir of echo and hounds.

"Ten couple of these huge rough hounds, in the full enjoyment of a fresh drag, on which every hound threw his tongue freely, might well be a sound to gladden a hunter's heart, but so filled was the valley with the reiterations of a thousand echoes, that it was impossible to make out in what direction the hounds were pointing; and had it not been for the worn wet paths impressed by the footmarks of the eager pack which I traversed with rapid strides, I should have missed seeing the grandest passage in the day's sport,—namely, the rousing of the boar in that pile of rocks. Verily he was a monster, but

active as a mountain cat, in spite of his ungainly shape and huge size. When first found, he was lying in the open under cover of an impending ledge, mantled with ivy and stunted oak ; but the ground being exposed, and at some distance above the grand clitter, or pile of rocks, he rapidly descended the broken ground, bounding like a chamois from the head of one boulder to another, clearing chasms in his stride, and at length disappearing in a subterranean passage beneath the rocky mass. Several shots had been fired by the peasants, but whether or not he had been wounded at all was a matter of much doubt among those who had reserved their fire.

“The fate of the hounds became now a matter of the most intense interest to all. The whole pack had been uncoupled, and were hard and close upon his quarters, as the brute took refuge in the superincumbent mass. In an instant every hound was lost to sight ; and then commenced an uproar and a wailing such as torture only could upraise—the shriek of hounds in their agony. Kergoorlas had not yet arrived ; but St. Prix, standing on the top of a boulder and listening to the murder, seemed for a moment petrified with horror. Descending at a bound, however, from his pedestal, he and a dozen peasants after him at once rushed forwards, and clambering as they best could over the huge fragments of granite that barred their course, they soon gained the spot under which the fray was surging with a terrible din.

“‘He'll murder every hound of them,' shouted St. Prix, seizing his horn and blowing it like a madman; but this taking no effect upon the combatants, he quickly laid it down, and springing to the base of the rocks, on the very brink of the river, he drew his *couteau*, and was about to crawl, for he could not walk erect, into the hollow chasm where the fight was going on. Keryfan (one of the gentlemen) seized him by the arm, however, and with the timely aid of three or four peasants dragged him forcibly back.

“‘Stay, M. de St. Prix,' said one of them; ‘enter not there, or you'll rush to certain death. Let us light a fire behind the boar, and that, my word for it, will unearth him at once.’

“To this proposition he reluctantly gave way; and in a few minutes a pile of heather, ferns, leaves, and dead wood was dropped through a cranny, exactly over the spot known to be the far end of the cavern, and probably exactly upon the boar. Then a whole box of lucifer matches was cast in a state of ignition right into the heather, and in a few seconds a dense volume of smoke, followed by a roaring flame, shot upwards. Instantly the rattling of pebbles and a strange rumbling commotion were heard below, and, almost before a peasant could snatch up his gun, the huge swarthy beast burst out, and dashing into the bed of the torrent, swam straight for the opposite shore. Before he landed, however, the messengers of

death were hard upon him. Pierced by several shots at the same moment, he rolled a lifeless carcass on the river's edge. His lower tusks were seven inches in length, and he was said to weigh nearly four hundredweight. A grander brute neither Kergoorlas nor St. Prix had ever seen; and as may be supposed, the homage they received from the peasantry was only such as the ancients were wont to pay to demigods who had rid them of some terrible enemy.

"Ere a single horn had proclaimed the *mort*, and while yet the monster boar was lying with his head and feet on the gravelly bank, and his hind legs still quivering in the stream, St. Prix on hands and knees was crawling into the cave—the first, as he always was, to give aid to the suffering hounds. Fourteen couple only out of the eighteen had crossed the river, while three shivering, limping hounds, out of the remaining eight, were standing on the water's edge, as if utterly unable to stem the torrent in their maimed and helpless condition. Five hounds were therefore wanting to complete the number of the hunting-pack.

"An interval of more than ten minutes had elapsed, during which time many a peasant volunteered to enter the cave, exhibiting intense anxiety for the fate of the hounds, when St. Prix again appeared at the surface, dragging after him a hound by the hind legs, literally disembowelled and dead. The four others, he said, had been so cruelly mauled, that not being known by the hounds, he dared not handle

one of them. M. de Kergoorlas's chief piqueur, divesting himself of his goat-skin jacket, entered the gloomy aperture. One, two, three, four were at length brought out singly and tenderly by the patient piqueur ; and a more piteous scene was never witnessed.

" 'How was it possible for them to escape?' said St. Prix, energetically, 'when eighteen couple were crowded together in that narrow cavern cheek-by-jowl with that terrible tusker? It is a mystery to me that so few have been killed.'

" 'Too many, too many,' said Kergoorlas, with a groan; 'but who could foresee that the brute would run to ground, and there butcher my hounds in this fashion?'

" 'Two out of the four died almost immediately after their wounds were washed; another was so injured that he was destroyed on the spot; while the fourth, sorely maimed, was carried to a distant cottage on a goat-skin jacket, which, with a peasant at each corner, served the purpose of a most convenient ambulance.....The evil of working too large a pack for boar could not have been more severely exemplified than in the recent massacre, although the circumstances, to be sure, were somewhat exceptional; the cavern proving a fatal trap in which the mischief was aggravated by numbers, and the animal hunted being a *solitaire*, one of the fiercest and most powerful of wild beasts."

Wild boars sharpen their tusks, which are their chief implements of warfare, on the stumps of oak trees; and many of the trees near the water's edge were scored and seamed deeply all round their boles. The bristles of a boar are much prized: they are immediately, on his death, taken from his neck by some *cordonnier* peasant, if he is not interfered with. The difference in size and strength between the bristles of a young tusker and those of "the old solitaire was quite remarkable, the latter being more like wire rods than the growth of a pig's back, long, strong, and stiff as an awl, the very requirement adapted for the cobbler's use. No wonder, then, that these connoisseurs pounced with such avidity on so tempting a prize; nor that their discomfiture was expressed in bitter terms when Louis Trefarreg prevented them, as he sometimes did, from indulging in this spoil."

Not only do the peasants rejoice at the destruction of the wild boar, as granting them immunity from its devastations, but its flesh, which is cut up and divided amongst them by the piqueur of the *louveticier* under his direction, is almost the only animal food they enjoy; yet during this division, their modest demeanour and good-humour delighted their English visitor on every occasion.

The boar-hunter must be careful, in choosing his position for shooting, "not to go too near a run or footpath, but some yards wide of it; and secondly, in case you should wound and not kill your game, it

is always well to station yourself under the horizontal bough of a large tree, so low that in emergency you may spring up, seize it with both hands, and so lift yourself a few feet above the ground. This move will securely place you beyond reach of the boar's tusks, and the animal, thus foiled, will pass instantly on." Our Englishman was once compelled to adopt this advice regarding the tree. Four boars were advancing rapidly in single file towards him. "I brought my gun to bear," he says, "on the leading pig, touched the trigger, and over he went, dead and motionless as a bag of sand. The other three dashed on one side, and keeping a huge boulder between me and them, evaded my sight; so my second barrel was reserved for an old brute now close at hand. Seeing the dead pig in her path, and doubtless concluding that I was the cause of the calamity, she charged at once, and with such an impetus that no time was left me to choose my aim, or even to guard against the chance of killing one of the hounds; so I fired in her face, and down she came head-foremost at my feet. But the brute was not dead—my *balle-mariée* had glanced from her forehead, and merely stunned her for a moment; she struggled on her legs, and again came at me with a savage rush. I had just time, however, to back a yard or two, spring up and catch the friendly bough overhead; then drawing up my legs, she shot under me and passed instantly forward, with the hounds still at her heels."

And now, ladies and gentlemen, said the lecturer, I must thank you heartily for the courteous attention you have given throughout my long and, I fear, somewhat rambling discourse; but I have yet one small addition to make to it. I think you will all like to know the probable derivation of the word "halloo," as associated with the hunting-fields of old England. "That word halloo, by-the-by, has, as I believe," says our hunter, "a French origin, and is derived, not as the lexicographers say, from the word 'haler,' but from the practice of shouting 'Au loop! au loop!' which, phonetically written, would be precisely halloo, the very word used to encourage hounds to pursue their game at the present day both in France and England."

There is danger, if the halloo is too often indulged in, of dogs forgetting the scent to listen, using their noses too little and their ears too much. I shall close with the hope that none amongst you may be disturbed in his slumbers to-night by the vision of either fierce boar or grisly wolf, and that the sounds of baying dogs, and the inharmonious conversations of the ladies Grimalkin, may be equally distant from your drowsy ears.

Long and loud was the applause that greeted Mr. Thomas Norton, member of the F. and M. C., as he resumed his seat.

"You've acquitted yourself splendidly, Tom," cried

his uncle, Mr. Meadows, in a pleased voice. "You've kept our attention unflagging all the way through ;" and similar compliments resounded on every hand.

"I say, old fellow," said Frank next day, when the lads were busy gardening, "where did you pick up all that sort of thing? You've beaten Joe and me hollow."

"I don't think so," said Tom sincerely ; "I liked Joe's story first-rate, and yours was capital. They're different; but I don't see any use in comparing them. 'Comparisons are odious.' *Vide* copy-books."

"But you have given us bits from no end of books, Tom," said Hal. "You've been awfully industrious, and no mistake. I can compare you to nothing less than Dr. Watts's pattern bee,—

'Gathering honey every day
From every opening flower.'

"Tell us whose yarns about boar-hunting you read, Tom," said Frank. "They made my mouth water for sport ; they're so jolly."

"I don't know his name, Frank," replied Tom, "but the book is called 'Wolf-Hunting and Wild Sports in Lower Brittany.'"

"It's a jolly book, then ; but I expect, you young monkey, you've been taking *la crème de la crème*, and have left only the skim milk behind."

"Not exactly ; it's fine all the way through," said Tom. "Oh! and didn't I want to bring in a splendid bit against the drink, only I thought I must keep to forests and mountains."

"What was it?" said Joe.

"About a fellow called Gastel, a drunken huntsman, one of the piqueurs of Monsieur de Kergoorlas—his head man, in fact—who was always getting tipsy. He began every morning with absinthe, and kept drinking all he could lay hands on during the day. Once he set himself and some hounds on fire, when he was sleeping over some stables, and was nearly singed to death. The end of him was, he injured another man when he was mad drunk, and was shut up in prison, and there he had delirium tremens; and what do you think he fancied?"

"That he was killed by a boar," suggested Hal.

"No; worse than that. 'Oh!' he groaned out, 'such a horrid dream I have had!—hunted down by a pack of wolves that have been crunching and gnawing at my skull, and lapping up the very dregs of my brain! Oh, such torture!' He then burst into a flood of tears, which it was hoped would have brought him some relief; but in another instant his reason again forsook him, and he shrieked wildly, 'They're coming again, I tell you; they're on me, on me. Fire! fire!'"

"What was the end of the poor wretch? did he recover?" inquired the boys.

"No," answered Tom; "when his master went again to inquire for him, he was met by the medical officer, who told him it 'was all over.' He had had another fit, from which he did not rally."

The boys worked away silently for a time after Tom had told this sad story; then Frank resumed, "What were your other books, Tom?"

And Tom answered, "'The North-West Passage by Land,' by Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle, was another."

"Oh! I suppose your Indian trapping stories were from that. Well, go ahead; what else?"

"'Wild Sports of the Highlands,' by Charles St. John, gave me the stalking story," said Tom; "and I also consulted Uncle Fred's 'Penny Magazines,' and found some interesting quotations from a book on 'The Art of Deer-stalking,' by William Scrope, as well as those facts about the antlers, which I read principally to satisfy my own curiosity."

"Well, I pity Hal, I must say," said Frank, rather patronizingly; "for what more on earth he can find to say about mountains and forests than we three have said passes my comprehension."

"Suppose I try under the earth then," said Hal good-temperedly.

"Oh ho! not a bad idea either. Why, that puts one on a new scent altogether."

"I don't feel afraid that I shall not be able to find enough matter for one evening," said Hal; "the difficulty with me is to condense and arrange."

"Well, this holiday has been worth a good deal to us," remarked thoughtful Joe, "if it has only taught us what hosts of interesting things are waiting to be

learned about. I am sure our lives can't be long enough to find out half one would like to know."

"I don't think they are," said Tom. "Perhaps we shall go on learning after, Joe, without ever finding it any bother."

"I think it is very likely," said the boy dreamily, looking up at the soft blue sky above him.

CHAPTER V.

TREASURES ABOVE AND TREASURES BELOW.



THE weather being extremely warm, Mrs. Meadows suggested to the secretary of the F. and M. C. that it would make a pleasant variety if their next evening's lecture could be delivered out-of-doors.

Mr. Meadows had in his garden a large old-fashioned arbour, in which the audience could be conveniently accommodated, while the soft evening breezes would refresh and cool them as they listened. So Hal's paper was read to an accompaniment of the birds' songs of praise, and with the delicate perfume of roses and honeysuckles filling the air around.

It is my purpose, he began, to speak of what has not been much treated of by my fellow-members,—the treasures of the woods and the mountains, in vegetable and mineral products; the life of foresters and mountaineers, and the sources of their livelihood; and also the birds and fishes whose habits and whose value make them the prey of man. With so many purposes in view, I fear I shall find it impossible to

make my paper a very connected one; and my hearers will be good enough to be patient with me, whilst they bear in mind that the members of the club to which I have the honour to belong are especially anxious to obtain information of all kinds concerning the forests and mountains of the world.

Amongst the dangerous employments of the Alpine mountaineer are those of felling and floating the timber of their pine forests. The great wood speculators purchase of the communes on the Italian side of the Alps the trees of a large forest, and the *tagliatori di selva* and the *borratori*, or wood-fellers and floaters, have arranged to cut it down and transport it to the saw-mills. Both these operations are attended with danger. These men "run like woodpeckers, with climbing-irons for claws, up the stems, and hew off the boughs, so that the slender staff, adorned only with its crown, stands up like a torch. Then comes the work of the axe. Where the moss embraces the stem most luxuriantly is the most sappy texture of the tree, and there the axe finds the most yielding place to its cuts. The woodman's hand bares the stem from the chains of ivy or thick cushions of moss, which passed their parasitic life on the strong tree. Then his axe glances clear in the sunshine. Blow on blow rings through the wide quiet forest, and the murderous axe penetrates deeper and deeper. The chips fly hissing through the air; the wound grows greater, and comes nearer to the sound, internal

tree-kernel. Now the axe is no longer sufficient: after a short rest, the woodmen take the saw. It is a dangerous position which they have chosen, for the ground sinks steeply from their sight. The foundation on which they stand oscillates with the stirring of the root-work of the tree they are felling. Rent after rent and cut after cut sinks deeper towards the sound side, opposite the axe wound, till here, too, the feeble power of man gives way, and the murderous instrument refuses its help. Then comes the last means of torture for the noble tree resigned to its fate. A broad wedge has to stretch the yawning cleft, and the eating teeth of the saw now work more freely. Now there is a groan through the tree like the shudder of death; his top trembles and wavers gently to and fro; he still arms himself; the firm, tough power that lives in him holds him up: then the last vital fibre rends—a rattling crash, and the pillar of the forest sinks with a plunging fall, till some other stem or projecting tooth of rock stops its wild flight. Many a woodman has been swept away from his post by the boughs of a tree charging down the mountain, before it had been sufficiently felled, and carried over the cliffs. So the slaughter continues. As often as part lies on the ground, the splitting of the wood into blocks or *borre* of a certain length and the stripping off of the bark or *strapina* begin. Up till this time the felling of the tree has little that is peculiar, except the dangerousness of its

standing-place. The like may be seen in other forests. But now comes the work of the *borratori*. The heavy solid rollers could only be transported an hour's distance down to the river by a great exertion of strength, if some other much lighter means of transport had not been invented. These are the *sovender* or *seguender*—that is, timber-slides or viaducts, which frequently not only equal but even excel the ancient aqueducts in boldness of construction. With an exquisitely cultivated sense of locality, with a power of accurate judgment by eye, and with a sharpness which would be wonderful in many an engineer, they spy out, without help from map or compass, without tables of measurement or hypsometrical data, ideal lines, reaching for hours over abysses, through forests, along walls of rock, sometimes in a straight line, sometimes in a number of windings, which preserve the right elevation, and come out at last to the chief valley. They use every small advantage that offers—a single projecting tree, an overhanging wall of rock, even the roofs of chalets have to serve as props for their constructions. These *strūsone* or timber-slides are built with uncommon accuracy of from six to seven smooth tree stems. They are three or five feet broad, basin-shaped, provided on both sides with projecting rims, and preserve a slope of at least ten in a hundred. So long as possible, they run on firm ground over the backs of the mountains. When the direction no longer

suits the borratore, he leaves the safe foundations, and suspends his path from the naked walls of gneiss or granite, just as the rain-gutter runs under the house-eaves; and where this becomes impossible, it spans the track with a desperate jump, at a tower's height, through the air, from one ravine bank to another, in lines comparable to the boldest bridges. It always preserves, however, approaches as convenient as possible, on which an accustomed mountaineer may pass over the giddy depths.

"When this ingenious, dangerous, and expensive work has been erected, called *las* or *laass* in the Tyrol and Styria, the borratori and their men wait for the winter. As soon as the first firm frost begins, they hasten up to their trough, pour water diligently over it, so that its cracks and clefts are filled with ice, and the whole interior surface of the canal is covered with a smooth icy crust. Often when the *föhn* (west wind) begins unexpectedly, the whole carefully produced level surface melts away again at night, and the work has to be done over again. If everything is prepared in this way, the transport begins at last. The hardy workman, despising the icy wind and wildest weather, climbs up the steep snow slopes to the place where the blocks are laid out. Winter has cast its white sheet of flakes over them, and only vague outlines show where they are buried. The first work is now the *portarunt*—that is, the carrying the timber to the slide. This is done in different

ways. Either, when the snow has a hard frozen surface, it is sufficient to set the blocks in motion, which then glide down over their winter path to the place, where they are brought on to the strisone; or a man fastens them together in the form of a triangle, places himself on the top of them, and goes down steering with his feet; or, as in the winter carrying of hay or wood in the other Alps, small sleighs are used. This work of carrying down to the path is generally kept till winter, because the blocks, being rough, heavy bodies, are much harder to move when the ground is not covered with snow.

"When the proper passage to the valley begins, the *borratori* divide themselves as sentinels at measured distances, like the watchmen on a railway, along the whole *sovenda*, armed with long strong spears. They especially place themselves at points where, in consequence of the windings of the troughs, the blocks might easily hitch as they slide down. At such places, too, the *eisriesen* (as they are called in Lower Austria) are raised at the outer side, to prevent the beams springing up in their swift course. The stems are now thrown in, one after the other, and piece after piece plunges down at a fiery speed far exceeding the pace of a locomotive, crossing a distance of several hours across precipices in a few moments. They generally carefully avoid throwing in crooked stems, because they easily cause lodgments or leap over the trough. If such a confusion arises, the

borratore telegraphs the interruption to the next post by a loud whistle, and the signal goes from man to man, up to the place of starting, where they wait till the hindrance is removed. A new signal conveys the order to continue. When several dry, frosty, and biting cold days, with clear moonlight nights, follow each other, they work on without stopping, to profit by the favourable disposition of the weather." It has been estimated by one of the proprietors of the forests "that half a million of trees are thus brought down in a winter. The quantity employed in the shoot alone is immense." The woodmen "shout and sing in lusty chorus, just like jolly tars at the capstan, as they lower or adjust the fallen timber." Yet "only under severe voluntary deprivations, and by efforts which almost produce exhaustion, is it possible to continue the work. Their way of living during the work is simple and modest enough. Polenta or maize-meal porridge and a little cheese form their whole support. Spirituous liquors, to give a stimulus, must be entirely avoided; for as they have frequently to stand still for hours in great cold, the use of brandy might produce sleep, which would result in death by freezing. But the danger of losing life by the fall or sudden leaping of the trees out of the trough is constantly present. In spite of the pointed *crampons* on his feet, the position of the borratore on the ice-covered cliffs is very unsteady. If blocks have stuck fast in the trough, an energetic application of strength



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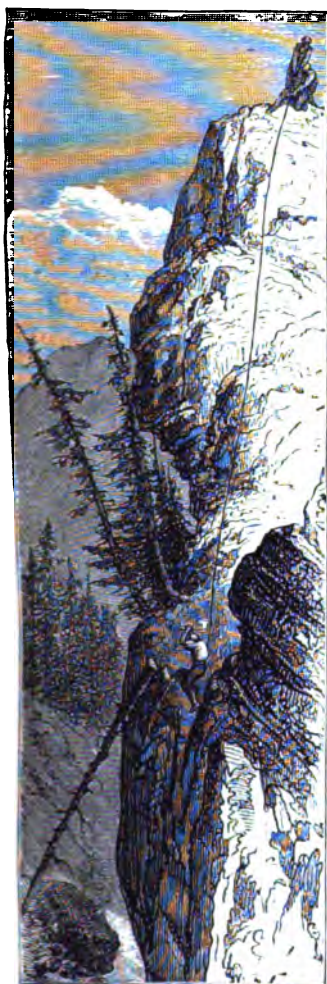
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ness of the fire. Hence the charcoal-burners are compelled to watch it through the long hours of the night as well as by day.

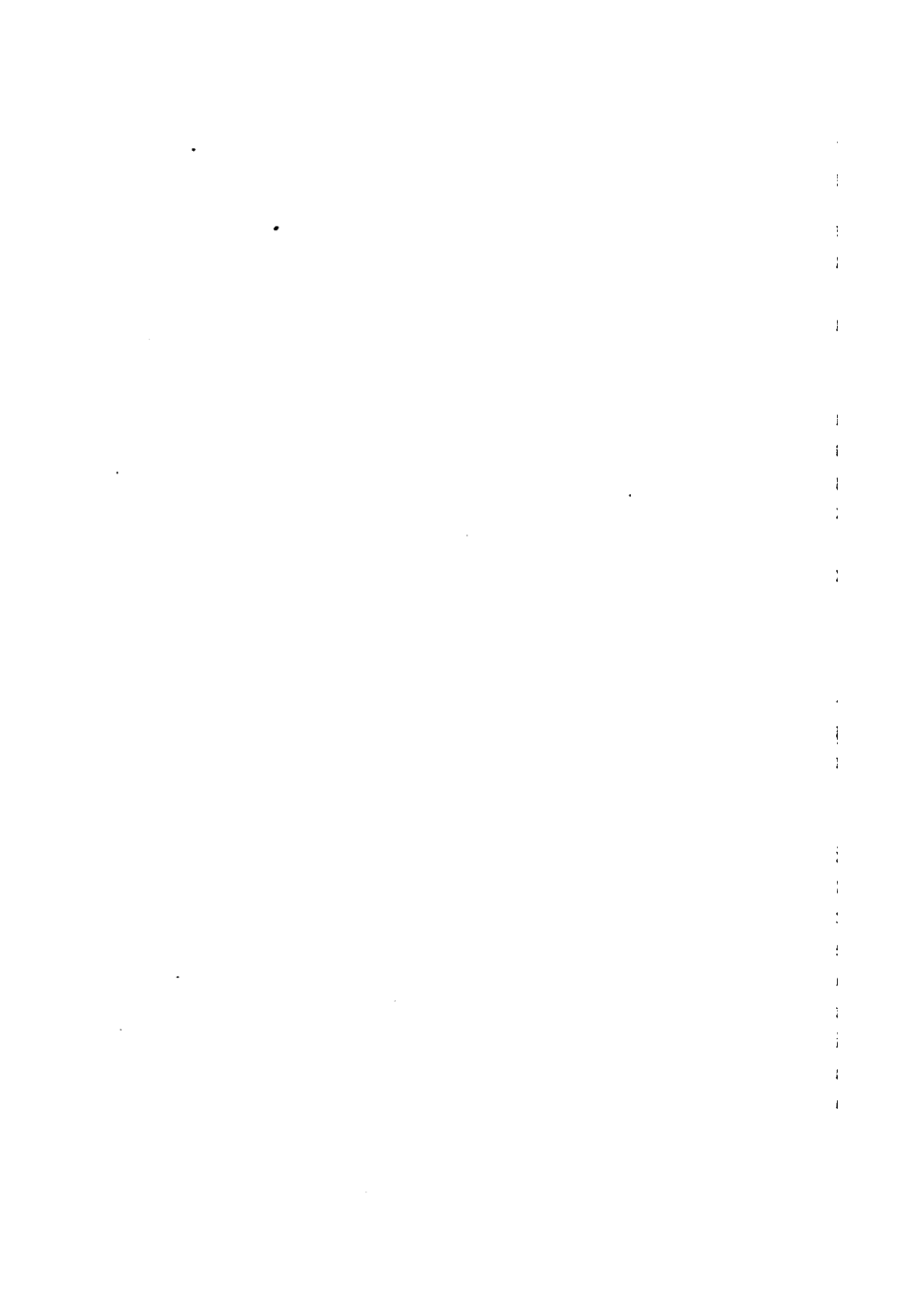
The charcoal-burners of the Black Forest in Germany have been the subjects of many an interesting story. Here is a legend of the origin of the town of Zähringen:—"In the wooded valleys of Zähringen, there, where the forest ascends to the summit called the Roskopf, once lived a young charcoal-burner, a stately, brave fellow. He might and should have been satisfied with his occupation, in which also his parents found a sufficient subsistence. However, he could not feel himself happy. Being sent once to the town by his parents, he had an opportunity of seeing a tournament, which excited in the youth an inclination for chivalry.

"His parents being dead, and filial duty not binding him longer to his paternal hut, he wished to leave the wood for ever, and take service by the most renowned knight. As he was revolving these thoughts, an old hermit came to him and said, 'I know what you meditate; however, believe me, the means to attain your wish lie only in this wood, and in your occupation hitherto; but you must choose a better place than where you have till now burned charcoal. Come with me; I will show you a better place.' In astonishment the youth followed the old man.

"'Here,' said the hermit, 'continue to burn your

charcoal;' and with these words he disappeared before the charcoal-burner could ask for an explanation. 'The old man's words,' he thought, 'will explain themselves in time. In any case, it cannot hurt, if meantime I obey him.' With great exertion he hewed down the strong trunks which surrounded the hill; erected a kiln, and covered it, before kindling, with the rocky earth of the eminence. How great was his astonishment, as he took away the cover, after the kiln had burned out, to find several pieces of gold, which had formed themselves out of the stones by the heat. He prudently concealed the treasure in a near cleft, then built a second kiln, and afterwards several others, and all produced similar booty, so that he soon found himself in the possession of an immense fortune. Occupied with several plans to invest his gold, one evening he went to bed late; the care of his treasure tormented him, and he could not sleep. Then he thought he heard a light tap at his door; he rose, and, still in doubt, a strong knock convinced him he was not mistaken. Courageously he opened the door, and by the pale light of the moon he saw before him a man, who demanded admittance.

"The charcoal-burner was the more astonished at this nocturnal visit, as it was very seldom that a wanderer came into this solitary place, and he therefore hesitated to receive the unknown; but this last having asserted he was an unfortunate man being



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flambeaux they carry up with them, as, when the man disturbs the hive, the sparks falling from it cause, it is said, the bees to fly down in chase of them, instead of attacking their real enemy, who then takes the hive and lowers it by a rattan string. The bees escape unhurt. This plan does not appear to be as safe as that pursued by the Pakatan Dayaks, who kindle a large fire under the tree, and throwing green branches upon it, raise so stifling a smoke that the bees rush forth, and the man ascending takes their nest in safety. Both these operations are generally conducted at night, although the second might be, I imagine, practised in safety during the day.

"The Dayaks have a superstitious belief in ghosts and spirits, and tell of the Antus who caused the death of the wax-hunters by pushing them off the mengiris or tapang tree. When the unfortunate men, from inefficient preparation—as their companions not keeping up a great fire under the trees to stupefy the bees—are so stung as to let go their hold, the natural explanation is never taken, they fly to their superstitions." Mr. St. John, in whose work on Borneo, "Life in the Forests of the Far East," I find these particulars, writes in his journal: "We had another very happy find to-day; for, while passing under a fine tapang tree, we noticed the remains of a bees' nest scattered about, and every particle was eagerly appropriated. From the marks around, it appeared as if a bear had

climbed this lofty tree, and torn down the nest to be devoured by its young below, as there were numerous tracks of the smaller animals around; but whether the comb had been sucked by the bears or not was very immaterial to our men, who rejoiced in securing the little honey still clinging to it." At one place "during the night our rest was much disturbed by bees, which stung us several times" (they were stopping, in consequence of heavy rain, at some *Ida'an* huts), "and Mr. Low, with that acuteness which never deserts him in all questions of natural history, pronounced them to be the 'tame' bees, the same as he had last seen thirteen years ago among the *Senah Dayaks* in *Sarawak*. About midnight we were visited by a big fellow, who, our guides assured us, wanted to pilfer; but we found next morning that he had come to complain of his hives having been plundered. On inquiry we found the man who had done the deed. He was fined three times the value of the damage, and the amount handed over to the owner."

The manufacture of charcoal forms another mode of employment to the dweller in the forest. Hard woods alone are suitable for the making of charcoal. Logs are cut and heaped together, and banked over securely with earth, and set on fire, a few air-holes being made for the smoke to escape through, and the wood is only allowed to smoulder. Great care is necessary to keep it at a proper degree of heat, and to prevent the consumption of the wood by the fierce-

day behind us, showed that the fire was still burning furiously."

The treasures of the woods and mountains which are above ground—the rich furs, the noble trees, the numerous animals—have already been partially treated of by my fellow-members of the F. and M. C. I propose now to fill up some points which they have omitted. The grouse, ptarmigan, and capercaillie (or cock of the wood) are essentially mountain and forest birds, and afford excellent sport. I find a curious account of the American prairie grouse:—"A peculiarity of the prairie grouse enabled us to procure a good supply of them. In the spring of the year these birds assemble together at sunrise and sunset in parties of from twenty to thirty at some favourite spot, generally a little hillock or rising ground, and dance—yes, dance like mad! The prairie grouse is a running bird, and does not ordinarily progress by hopping; but on these festive occasions they open their wings, put both feet together, and hop like men in sacks, or the birds in a pantomime, up to one another, waltz round and 'set' to the next! A prairie chicken dance is a most ludicrous sight; and while they are engaged in it they become so absorbed in the performance that it is easy to approach them. Their places of rendezvous are recognizable at once from the state of the ground, the grass being beaten perfectly flat in a circular patch, or worn away by the constant beating

of feet. At the present juncture we took advantage of their weakness for a social hop, and broke up the ball in a most sanguinary manner,—justified, we hope, by dire necessity. We never, however, took this mean advantage of them except when driven by actual hunger to obtain food in the best manner we could. The prairie was at that time very beautiful, being covered with the large blue flowers of a species of anemone. The grouse feed greedily upon them when in bloom, and we always found their crops full of them.

“The wood-partridge or willow-grouse frequents the thick woods and the low grounds, and is found on both sides of the Rocky Mountains. When disturbed, it generally flies up into a tree; and if there are several together, they tamely sit to be shot, one after the other. In the spring the male bird exhibits himself for the delight of the female in the following manner:—He sits upon a branch, and ruffling his feathers and spreading his tail like a turkey-cock, shuts his eyes, and drums against his sides with his wings, producing a sound remarkably like distant thunder. While thus engaged, he becomes so absorbed in the performance that he will allow any one to approach him near enough to snare him with a noose attached to a short stick. By the middle of June the partridges were surrounded by broods of young, and we ceased to hunt them. When we encountered them, the hen bird, and often the cock also, would

come rushing up to within a couple of yards of us, with wings spread and feathers erect, just like a barn-door hen protecting her chickens."

In the Highlands of Scotland "the species of grouse called ptarmigan is found only, as every sportsman knows, on the highest ranges. Living above all vegetation, this bird finds its scanty food amongst the loose stones and rocks that cover the summits of Ben Nevis and some other mountains. It is difficult indeed to ascertain what food the ptarmigan can find in sufficient quantities on the barren heights where they are found. Being visited by the sportsman but rarely, these birds are seldom at all shy or wild, but if the day is fine, will come out from among the scattered stones, uttering their peculiar croaking cry, and run in flocks near the intruder on their lonely domain, offering even to the worst shot an easy chance of filling his bag. When the weather is windy and rainy, the ptarmigan are frequently shy and wild; and when disturbed, instead of running about like tame chickens, they fly rapidly off to some distance, either round some shoulder of the mountain, or, by crossing some precipitous and rocky ravine, get quite out of reach. The shooting these birds should only be attempted on fine calm days. The labour of reaching the ground they inhabit is great, and it often requires a firm foot and steady head to keep the sportsman out of danger after he has got to the rocky and stony summit of the mountain. In deer-stalking

I have sometimes come amongst large flocks of ptarmigan, who have run croaking close to me, apparently conscious that my pursuit of nobler game would prevent my firing at them. Once, on one of the highest mountains of Scotland, a cold wet mist suddenly came on. We heard the ptarmigan near us in all directions, but could see nothing at a greater distance than five or six yards. We were obliged to sit down and wait for the mist to clear away, as we found ourselves gradually getting entangled amongst loose rocks, which frequently, on the slightest touch, rolled away from under our feet, and we heard them dashing and bounding down the steep side of the mountain, sometimes appearing, from the noise they made, to be dislodging and driving before them large quantities of *débris*. Others seemed to bound in long leaps down the precipices, till we lost the sound far below us in the depths of the corries. Not knowing our way in the least, we agreed to come to a halt for a short time, in hopes of some alteration in the weather. Presently a change came over the appearance of the mist, which settled in large fleecy masses below us, leaving us, as it were, on an island in the midst of a snow-white sea, the blue sky and bright sun above us without a cloud. As a light air sprang up, the mist detached itself in loose masses, and by degrees drifted off the mountain-side, affording us again a full view of all around us.

"Ptarmigan are found on the high mountains of

the Alps, and black game are plentiful in the season, which is, however, late, not commencing until October. The young birds being hatched so far on in the season, I was assured that in the forests they get up thirty or forty at a time, and I was strongly urged to return for the *chasse*. At Borca, below Monte Rosa, the "room had no fireplace, and the cold atmosphere diffused by the near mass of the mountain struck so chilly in the evening, that we went and sat with our host and Delapierre in the wide and comfortable kitchen chimney-corner, where a great wood fire blazed cheerily. Albesini facetiously remarked of their climate that they required fires thirteen months in the year, two-thirds of which he declared were winter, and the other third excessive cold. The snow lies so deep in winter, that though they constantly hear black game crowing close to the house, and the ptarmigan and chamois come quite down into the valley, they are unable to go after them. During this rigorous season the game would starve, but for the providential provision of the long-bearded lichens which clothe the pine forests, and on which the chamois browse, while the pine-tops themselves afford sustenance to the black game and ptarmigan.

"Perhaps the changes of plumage in none of the feathered races are more worthy of attention than those which the ptarmigan undergo. Their full summer plumage is of a yellow, more or less inclining to brown, beautifully barred with zigzag lines of black.

Their winter plumage is pure white, except that the outer tail feathers, the shafts of the quills, and in our British species a streak from the eye to the beak, are black.

“The brown patches of heath on the rocky sides of the mountain assimilate well in their broken and blended tints with the summer livery of the ptarmigan; and as concealment from the observation of enemies is one of the laws of nature, this end is, so far, well answered. But when the mountains are covered with snow, when the whole surface of the country is one wide waste of dazzling white, the brown ptarmigan can only escape the notice of its foes by adopting a corresponding dress, so that, while crouching in the snow, it will scarcely attract the glance of the Iceland falcon or the snowy owl. Yet the safety which arises from its change of plumage is neither the sole nor the principal motive for that change. This motive we consider to be the provision against the intensity of the cold accruing to the bird by the transition in question. For it not only happens that the plumage turns to white, but it becomes much fuller, thicker, and more downy; the bill is almost hidden, and the legs become so thickly covered with hair-like feathers to the very end of the toes, as to resemble the legs of some well-furred quadruped—the hare of the same wild regions, for instance.

“It is well known that colour greatly influences the rate at which bodies either reflect heat or acquire

and part with it ; and that objects which reflect heat the most, part with it the least. Now it has been observed that reflection takes place most readily in objects of a white colour, and from such consequently heat will radiate with difficulty. If two animals, one of a black colour and the other white, be placed in a higher temperature than that of their own body, the heat will enter the one that is black with the greatest rapidity, and elevate its temperature considerably above the other ; but should these animals be placed in a situation the temperature of which is considerably lower than their own, the black animal will give out its heat by radiation to every surrounding object colder than itself, and speedily have its temperature reduced, while the white animal will part with its heat by radiation at a much slower rate. The winter colour of the ptarmigan, therefore, in conjunction with its increased fulness of plumage, tends to limit the expenditure of the vital heat generated in the system. Some expenditure, however, must and does take place beyond that of summer, to meet which the energies of the system are taxed to increase the ratio of its production. This power in the animal system of generating heat is the principle upon which all animals are enabled to withstand the effect of cold, and to preserve life and health in a low temperature." " ' Food,' as the dear old Guide to Science by Dr. Brewer has it, which we have learned so diligently at school, ' is the fuel of the body. The

carbon of the food, mixing with the oxygen of the air, evolves heat in the same way that a fire or a candle does."

"With respect to the plumage of the ptarmigan, it may be asked whether this change is effected by a moult, or by a change in the colour of the feathers themselves. Recent experiments have proved beyond doubt that the change is that of the colour, not of the feathers; at least the plumage does not undergo a general moult for that purpose. The moult of those birds which, like the ptarmigan, change their livery, appears to be gradual, in order that the system may not be taxed too much, seeing that it already has to struggle with the debilitating effects of cold. Besides all this, it is scarcely reasonable to suppose that the young ptarmigan should have the brown plumage of their parents to moult when they have only just assumed it. The rationale appears to be thus: As the winter approaches, the summer dress loses its colour, and gradually passes into white, while, at the same time, an addition of new white feathers increases the fulness of the plumage. On the approach of spring the older feathers of the past year are thrown off, their place being supplied by coloured ones; while the white ones that sprang up as the winter set in, gradually gain the hue which was then denied them. Hence in spring ptarmigan are seen in a livery irregularly parti-coloured, the new feathers having been developed, while the white ones that endure are

as yet uncoloured: these having acquired their tints, will be moulted in autumn, so that no individual feather undergoes more than one mutation. It will be seen from this that the moult is never simultaneously performed, but that a partial loss and accession of feathers, except in the depth of winter, is almost constantly taking place.

"The red-grouse or moor-game undergoes no change of colour like the ptarmigan. It, however, acquires a greater mass of clothing, and its legs are more covered with hair-like feathers in winter than in summer.

"The capercailzie, or cock of the wood, is the most magnificent of the whole of the grouse tribe. Though rare in Scotland, it still abounds in the pine-forests of the various portions of the north of Continental Europe, such as Sweden and Norway. Its beak is white, the feathers on the front of the breast are dark glossy green, and the centre feathers of the tail are the longest. This genus *tetrao*, or forest-grouse, seldom visit the open country, but prefer the densest recesses of the woods, where they perch with ease upon the branches. The nest is very simply constructed, consisting of dried grasses, and placed upon the ground, sheltered among the herbage.

"This bird is characterized, among other points, by a peculiarity in the structure of the toes which deserves special attention. The tarsi are covered with hair-like feathers, but the toes are bare, having their



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edges strongly pectinated, or fringed with an array of rough prominences. For this remarkable fact it is difficult to assign a reason perfectly satisfactory to inquirers. Our own opinion is that it is a provision for enabling the birds to grasp securely the smooth branches of the trees on which they perch, more especially when they are covered with frozen snow, or a coat of glassy ice, which in the forests of the North is a common winter occurrence. In their flight the forest-grouse are rapid for short distances, but the motion of their wings is accompanied by a whirring noise, like that of the pheasant."

Here is a curious Scotch story, in connection with the shooting of birds, that amused me very much when I read it:—"From the top of the hill we saw a dreary expanse of flat ground, with Loch A-na-caillach in the centre of it—a bleak, cold-looking piece of water, with several small gray pools near it. Donald told me a long story of the origin of its name, pointing out a large cairn of stones at one end of it. The story was that some few years ago — 'not so long either, sir,' said Donald; 'for Rory Beg, the auld smuggler that died last year, has often told me that he minded the whole thing weel'—there lived down below the woods an old woman, by habit and repute a witch, and one possessed of more than mortal power, which she used in a most malicious manner, spreading sickness and death among man and beast. The minister of the place, who came, however, but once a

month to do duty in a building called a chapel, was the only person who, by dint of prayer and the Bible, could annoy or resist her. He at last made her so uncomfortable by attacking her with holy water and other spiritual weapons, that she suddenly left the place, and no one knew where she went to. It soon became evident, however, that her abode was not far off, as cattle and people were still taken ill in the same unaccountable manner as before.

“At last an idle fellow, who was out poaching deer near Loch A-na-caillach late one evening, saw her start through the air from the cairn of stones towards the inhabited part of the country. This put people on the look-out, and she was constantly seen passing to and fro on her unholy errands during the fine moonlight nights. Many a time was she shot at as she flew past, but without success. At last a pot-valiant and unbelieving old fellow, who had long been a sergeant in some Highland regiment, determined to free his neighbours from the witch, and having loaded his gun with a double charge of gunpowder, put in, instead of shot, a crooked sixpence and some silver buttons, which he had made booty of somewhere or other in war-time. He then, in the most foolhardy manner, laid himself down on the hill, just where we were standing when Donald told me the story, and, by the light of the moon, watched the witch leave her habitation in the cairn of stones. As soon as she was gone, he went to the very place

which she had just left, and there lay down in ambush to await her return. 'Deed did he, sir; for auld Duncan was a mad-like deevil of a fellow, and was feared of nothing.' Long he waited, and many a pull he took at his bottle of smuggled whisky, in order to keep out the cold of a September night. At last, when the first gray of the morning began to appear, 'Duncan hears a sough, and a wild uncanny kind of skirl over his head, and he sees the witch hersel', just coming like a muckle bird right towards him. 'Deed, sir, but he wished himself at hame; and his finger was so stiff with cold and fear that he couldna scarce pull the trigger. At last, and long, he did put out [shoot off], just as she was hovering over his head and going to light down on the cairn.' Well, to cut the story short, the next morning Duncan was found lying on the cairn in a deep slumber, half sleep and half swoon, with his gun burst, his collar-bone nearly broken, and a fine large heron shot through and through lying beside him, which heron, as every one felt assured, was the caillach herself. 'She hasna done much harm since yon,' concluded Donald; 'but her ghaist is still to the fore, and the loch-side is no canny after the gloamin'.'"

Before I give some particulars of the modes of fishing in the forest and the mountain, I feel tempted to introduce you to another four-legged denizen of the woods, the badger. "Notwithstanding the persecutions and indignities that he is unjustly doomed to

suffer, I maintain," says Mr. Charles St. John, "that he is far more respectable in his habits than we generally consider him to be. 'Dirty as a badger,' 'stinking as a badger,' are two sayings often repeated, but quite inapplicable to him. As far as we can learn of the domestic economy of this animal when in a state of nature, he is remarkable for his cleanliness: his extensive burrows are always kept perfectly clean and free from all offensive smell; no filth is ever found about his abode; everything likely to offend his olfactory nerves is carefully removed.

"I once, in the north of Scotland, fell in with a perfect colony of badgers. They had taken up their abode in an unfrequented range of wooded rocks, and appeared to have been little interrupted in their possession of them. The foot-paths to and from their numerous holes were beaten quite hard; and what is remarkable and worthy of note, they had different small pits dug at a certain distance from their abodes, which were evidently used as receptacles for all offensive filth: every other part of their colony was perfectly clean.

"A solitary badger's hole, which I once had dug out during the winter season, presented a curious picture of his domestic and military arrangements,—a hard and long job it was for two men to achieve. The passage here and there turned in a sharp angle round some projecting corners of rock, which he evidently made use of, when attacked, as

points of defence, making a stand at any of these angles, where a dog could not scratch to enlarge the aperture, and fighting from behind his stone buttress. After tracing out a long winding passage, the workmen came to two branches in the hole, each leading to good-sized chambers. In one of these was stored a considerable quantity of dried grass, rolled up into balls as large as a man's fist, and evidently intended for food; in the other chamber there was a bed of soft dry grass and leaves,—the sole inhabitant was a peculiarly large old dog-badger.

"Besides coarse grasses, their food consists of various roots; amongst others, I have frequently found about their holes the bulb of the common wild blue hyacinth. Fruit of all kinds and esculent vegetables form his repast, and I fear that he must plead guilty to devouring any small animal that may come in his way, alive or dead; though, not being adapted for the chase, or even for any very skilful strategy of war, I do not suppose that he can do much in catching an unwounded bird or beast. Eggs are his delight, and a partridge's nest with seventeen or eighteen eggs must afford him a fine meal, particularly if he can surprise and kill the hen-bird also. Snails and worms, which he finds above ground during his nocturnal rambles, are likewise included in his bill of fare.

"I was, one summer evening, walking home from fishing in Loch Ness, and having occasion to fasten

up some part of my tackle, and also expecting to meet my keeper, I sat down on the shore of the loch. I remained some time, enjoying the lovely prospect: the perfectly clear and unruffled loch lay before me, reflecting the northern shore in its quiet water. The opposite banks consisted, in some parts, of bright green-sward, sloping to the water's edge, and studded with some of the most beautiful birch trees in Scotland, several of the trees spreading out like the oak, and with their ragged and ancient-looking bark resembling the cork tree of Spain, others drooping and weeping over the edge of the water in the most lady-like and elegant manner. Parts of the loch were edged in by old lichen-covered rocks; while further on a magnificent scaur of red stone rose perpendicularly from the water's edge to a very great height. So clearly was every object on the opposite shore reflected in the lake below, that it was difficult, nay, impossible, to distinguish where the water ended and the land commenced,—the shadow from the reality. The sun was already set, but its rays still illuminated the sky. It is said that from the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step; and I was just then startled from my reverie by a kind of grunt close to me, and the apparition of a small gray waddling animal, which was busily employed in hunting about the grass and stones at the edge of the loch. Presently another and another appeared in a little grassy glade which ran down to the water's edge, till at last I saw

seven of them busily at work within a few yards of me, all coming from one direction. It at first struck me that they were some farmer's pigs taking a distant ramble; but I shortly saw that they were badgers, come from their fastnesses rather earlier than usual, tempted by the quiet evening, and by a heavy summer shower that was just over, and which had brought out an infinity of large black snails and worms, on which the badgers were feeding with good appetite. As I was dressed in gray, and sitting on a gray rock, they did not see me, but waddled about, sometimes close to me—only now and then, as they crossed my track, they showed a slight uneasiness, smelling the ground and grunting gently. Presently a very large one, which I took to be the mother of the rest, stood motionless for a moment, listening with great attention, and then giving a loud grunt, which seemed perfectly understood by the others, she scuttled away, followed by the whole lot.

"I was soon joined by my attendant, whose approach they had heard long before my less acute ears gave me warning of his coming. In trapping other vermin in these woods, we constantly caught badgers; sometimes several were found in the traps. I always regretted this, as my keeper was most unwilling to spare their lives, and I fancy seldom did so. His arguments were tolerably cogent, I must confess. When I tried to persuade him that they were quite harmless, he answered me by asking, 'Then

why, sir, have they got such teeth, if they don't live, like a dog or a fox, on flesh? and why do they get caught so often in traps baited with rabbits?' I could not but admit that they had most carnivorous-looking teeth, and well adapted to act on the offensive as well as defensive, or to crunch the bones of any young hare, rabbit, or pheasant that came in their way. When caught in traps, they never leave part of their foot behind them, and so escape, as foxes and other vermin frequently do; but they display very great strength and dexterity in drawing up the peg of the trap, and this done, they will carry off the heaviest trap to an amazing distance, over rock or heather. They never attempt to enter their hole with a trap dangling to their foot, but generally lay up in some furze-bush or thicket. On these occasions we invariably found them by tracking them with a dog which generally attended the trapper, and which dog was peculiarly skilful in tracking animals of this kind.

"One of the badger's most favourite repasts are the contents of the nest of the wasp or the wild bee, great numbers of which he must destroy. However far underground the hive may be, and in however strong and difficult a situation, he digs them up, and, depending on his rough coat and long hair as a protection from their stings, devours comb, larvæ, honey, and insects. Many a wasp's nest I have found dug up in this way, and often far from the badger's usual abode;

but the tracks of the animal always made it evident who had been the robber.

"The badger is easily tamed, and will, if taken young and well used, become much attached to his master. When first caught, his efforts to escape show a degree of strength and ingenuity which is quite wonderful, digging and tearing at his prison with the strength of a rhinoceros. When first imprisoned, if looked at he immediately rolls himself up into a ball and remains quite motionless. As soon as the coast is clear again, he continues his attempts to escape; but if unsuccessful, he soon becomes contented in his confinement.

"I one day found a badger not much hurt in a trap. Tying a rope to his hind leg, I drove him home before me, as a man drives a pig, but with much less trouble; for he made no attempts at escape, but trotted quietly ahead, only occasionally showing a natural inclination to bolt off the main path whenever he passed any diverging road, all of which were probably familiar haunts of the unlucky beast. When at home, I put him into a paved court, where I thought he could not possibly escape. The next morning, however, he was gone: having displaced a stone that I thought him quite incapable of moving, and then digging under the wall, he had got away.

"The badger always puts me in mind of a miniature bear; and to this family he evidently belongs. His proportions are similar to those of the bear; his

manner of placing his feet on the ground is like that of a bear, and is very peculiar. Beyond the marks of his toes—which, five in number, mark the ground in nearly a straight line—are the impressions of his strong, sharp nails, apparently unconnected with, and at the distance of an inch or two from, the rest of his track. These long and powerful nails are a formidable weapon, and in engagements with dogs he makes good use of them, inflicting fearful and sometimes fatal wounds. Though a quiet animal, and generally speaking not much given to wandering, I have occasionally fallen in with his unmistakable track miles from any burrow. During winter he not only keeps entirely within his hole, but fills up the mouth of it to exclude the cold and any troublesome visitor who might intrude on his slumbers. Frequently, however, tempted by mild weather in the winter, he comes out for some good purpose of his own—either to enjoy the fresh air or to add to his larder; but never does he venture out in frost or snow. Sometimes I have known a badger leave the solitude of the woods and take to some drain in the cultivated country, where he becomes very bold and destructive to the crops, cutting down wheat and ravaging the gardens in a surprising manner. One which I know now to be living in this manner derives great part of his food during the spring from a rookery, under which he nightly hunts, feeding on the young rooks that fall from their nest, or on the old ones that have

been shot. This badger eludes every attempt to trap him. Having more than once run narrow risks of this nature, he has become so cunning that no one can catch him. If a dozen baited traps are set, he manages to carry off the baits and spring every trap, always with total impunity to himself. At one time he was watched out to some distance from his drain, and traps were then put in all directions round it; but, by jumping over some and rolling over others, he escaped all. In fact, though a despised and maltreated animal, when he has once acquired a certain experience in worldly matters, few beasts show more address and cunning in keeping out of scrapes. Though eaten in France, Germany, and other countries, and pronounced to make excellent hams, we in Britain despise him as food, though I see no reason why he should not be quite as good as any pork. The badger becomes immensely fat. Though not a great eater, his quiet habits and his being a great sleeper prevent his being lean.

“The immense muscular power that he has in his chest and legs enables him to dig with great rapidity; while his powerful jaws (powerful, indeed, beyond any other animal of his size) enable him to tear away any obstacle in the shape of roots, etc., that he meets with. He can also stand with perfect impunity a blow on his forehead which would split the frontal bone of an ox. This is owing to its great thickness, and also to the extra protection of a strong

ridge or keel which runs down the middle of his head. A comparatively slight blow on the back of his head kills him. In his natural state he is more than a match for any animal that would be inclined to molest him, and can generally keep at bay any dog small enough to enter his hole. Fighting at advantage behind some stone or root, he gives the most fearful bites and scratches; while the dog has nothing within his reach to attack save the badger's formidable array of teeth and claws.

"Though nearly extinct as one of the *feræ naturæ* of England, the extensive woods and tracts or rocks in the north of Scotland will, I hope, prevent the badger's becoming, like the beaver and other animals, wholly a creature of history and existing only in record. Much should I regret that this respectable representative of so ancient a family, the comrade of mammoths and other wonders of the antediluvian world, should become quite extirpated. Living, too, in remote and uncultivated districts, he very seldom commits any depredations deserving of death or of persecution, but subsists on the wild succulent grasses and roots and the snails and reptiles which he finds in the forest glades, or on rare occasions makes capture of young game or wounded rabbits or hares. I do not believe that he does or can hunt down any game that would not otherwise fall a prey to crow or weasel, or which has the full use of its limbs; it is

only wounded and injured animals that he can catch.

"It is difficult to understand how any person who is not lost to every sense of humanity and shame can take delight in the cowardly and brutal amusement of badger-baiting;—instead of amusement, I should have said the disgusting exhibition of a peaceable and harmless animal worried by fierce and powerful dogs. The poor badger, too, has probably been kept for a length of time in a confined and close hutch, thereby losing half his energy and strength; while the dogs, trained to the work, and in full vigour of wind and limb, attack him in the most tender and vulnerable parts. Truly, I always feel a wish to make the badger and his keeper change places for a few rounds. Not that I would pay the former so bad a compliment as to suppose that he would take delight in tormenting even so great a brute as his jailer must be."

Here is a picture of fishing by torchlight in the Amazon:—"We can go out any evening with the fishermen, who supply not only the proprietor's table, but the people on the estate. Motherly Mrs. Rhome (the wife of the proprietor) packs away a great basket of provisions for us, and we take care to go with thick coats, for the night air is cool. Thus fortified, we seat ourselves, with our host, in the middle of a wooden canoe, among heaps of carana fagots, which are to be used for torches. The river is still and

dark ; we see the stars reflected in it and flickering with the current, until we can hardly tell them from the dancing fire-flies above. Nothing is defined: clumps of forest stand out vaguely over the meadows; in the shadow you cannot tell where water ends and land begins. The men paddle swiftly but silently; we can hear fish leaping from the water, night-birds complaining from the solitary trees, frogs and crickets in the marshes, a stray alligator, may be, rippling the surface as he disappears beneath it. Our fisherman lights his torch and throws a ruddy glow over the water. Flap! Already he has speared a fish in the shallows—waving the torch with his left hand, while he uses the trident with his right. Flap! flop! A big caranana is squirming about in the bottom of the canoe. Flop! There is another fish—and another—a harvest of them; the torch-holder cannot spear them fast enough. We paddle slowly about among the grass clumps, sometimes startling a bird on an overhanging branch,—once the poor bewildered thing comes within reach of a boatman, who catches it in his hand to carry home to the children. Finally, the torch goes out, and we go home to sleep far into the bright morning.”

Other modes of fishing are practised by the Indians of the Brazilian forests. “In the summer they come by hundreds to the lakes and channels to fish for the great pirarucú, and to prepare the flesh, just as cod-fish is prepared on the Newfoundland Banks. They

build little huts along the shores; trading canoes come with their stock of cheap wares to barter for the fish; and a kind of aquatic community is formed, which breaks up with the January floods. The pirarucú feeds among the floating grass patches, in shallow water; sometimes the fishermen watch for it here. In the open lakes one man paddles the canoe gently, while another in the bow stands ready to cast his harpoon at the fish as they come to the surface. Successful lake fisheries depend, first, on high floods, which allow the fish to come in from the river over the submerged land; and secondly, on low summer *vasantes*, which keep them confined to narrow limits and in shallow water. When both of these fail, the fisheries are unproductive; hence the price of dried pirarucú varies in different years from one dollar fifty cents to eight dollars the *arroba* (thirty-two pounds). Most Americans do not care to eat it at any price, yet one may come to like it very well. It is the standard article of food with the lower classes all through the Amazons. Besides the pirarucú, the lakes and channels swarm with smaller fishes innumerable. The Indians catch them with a line, or spear them with tridents; in the small streams they are shot with arrows,—an art which requires peculiar skill, since one must allow for the refraction of the water.

“Even the little brown urchins take lessons by hooking the hungry *piranhas*, which will bite at

anything from a bit of salt meat to a bather's toe. Our Northern trout-fishers are scandalized to see these boys thrashing the water with their poles to attract the piranhas. Turtles, too, are caught in the river; and on the sand-banks, where the animals come to dig their nests, the canoemen go around with sharpened sticks probing for the delicious eggs. Oil is made from these eggs; and on the Upper Amazon the turtles themselves are kept in pens for the winter supply of meat."

In Borneo, the Dayaks make fish-traps for the mountain streams. "The river was full of Ida'an fish-traps, made by damming up half the stream, and forcing the water and the fish to pass into a huge bamboo basket. They appeared to require much labour in the construction, particularly in the loose stone walls or dams. As we advanced we found the whole stream turned into one of these traps, in which they captured very fine fish, particularly after heavy rain. I bought one with large scales, about eighteen inches long, which was of a delicious flavour."

The Highlanders of Scotland spear salmon by torchlight. "I once fell in with a band of Highlanders who were busily employed in this amusing but illegal pursuit. And a most exciting and interesting proceeding it was. The night was calm and dark; the steep and broken rocks were illuminated in the most brilliant manner by fifteen or sixteen torches, which were carried by as many active High-



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landers, and glanced merrily on the water, throwing the most fantastic light and shade on all around as they moved about. Sometimes one of them would remain motionless for a few moments, as its bearer waited in the expectation that some fish which had been started by his companions would come within reach of his spear, as he stood with it ready poised, and his eager countenance lighted up by his torch as he bent over the water. Then would come loud shouts and a confused hurrying to and fro, as some great fish darted amongst the men; and loud and merry peals of laughter when some unlucky fellow, darting at a fish in too deep water, missed his balance and fell headlong into the pool. Every now and then a salmon would be seen hoisted into the air and quivering on an uplifted spear.

"The fish, as soon as caught, was carried ashore, where it was knocked on the head, and taken charge of by some man older than the rest, who was deputed to this office. Thirty-seven salmon were killed that night; and I must say that I entered into the fun, unmindful of its not being quite in accordance with my ideas of right and wrong, and I enjoyed it probably as much as any of the wild lads who were engaged in it. There was not much English talked amongst the party, as they found more expressive words in Gaelic to vent their eagerness and impatience. All was good humour, however; and though they at first looked on me with some slight suspicion,

yet when they saw that I enjoyed their torchlight fishing, and entered fully into the spirit of it, they soon treated me with all consideration and as one of themselves. I happened to know one or two of the men; and after it was over, and we were drying our drenched clothes in a neighbouring bothy, it occurred to me to think of the river bailiffs and watchers, several of whom I knew were employed on that part of the stream, and I asked where they were that they did not interfere with the somewhat irregular proceeding in which we had all been engaged.

“‘Deed ay, sir, there are no less than twelve bailies and offishers on the water here; but they are mostly douce-like lads, and don’t interfere much with us, as we only come once or twice in the season. Besides which, they ken well that if they did, they might get a wild ducking amongst us all, and they wouldna ken us again, as we all come from beyont the braes yonder. Not that we would wish to hurt the puir chiels,’ continued my informer, as he took off a glass of whisky, ‘as they would be but doing their duty. They would as lave, however, I am thinking, be taking a quiet dram at Sandy Roy’s down yonder, as getting a ducking in the river, and they are wise enough not to run the risk of it.’

“Not bad reasoning either, thought I; nor can I wonder that the poor water-bailiffs would prefer a quiet bowl of toddy to a row with a party of wild Badenoch poachers, who, though good-natured enough

on the whole, were determined to have their night's fun out, in spite of opposition. There are worse poachers, too, than these said Highlanders, who only come down now and then, more for the amusement than the profit of the thing, and whom it is generally better policy to keep friends with than to make enemies of.

"The jumping of a salmon up a fall is a curious and beautiful sight, and the height they leap, and the perseverance which they show in returning again and again to the charge, after making vain efforts to surmount the fall, are quite wonderful. Often on a summer evening, when the river is full of fish, all eager to make their way up, have I watched them for hours together, as they sprang in rapid succession, looking like pieces of silver as they dashed up the falls with rapid leaps. The fish appear to bend their head to their tail, and then to fling themselves forward and upwards, much as a bit of whalebone whose two ends are brought together springs forward on being released. I have often watched them leaping, and this has always seemed the way in which they accomplished their extraordinary task. Both salmon and sea-trout, soon after they enter the fresh water from the sea, make wonderful leaps into the air, shooting perpendicularly upwards to the height of some feet, with a quivering motion which is often quite audible. This is most likely to get rid of a kind of parasitical insect which adheres to them when they first leave the sea. The

fishermen call this creature the sea-louse ; it appears to cause a great deal of irritation to the fish. It is a sure sign that the salmon is in good condition, and fresh from the sea, when these insects are found adhering to him.

“At Logie, in Inverness-shire, the view of the course of the Findhorn river, and the distance seen far up the glen till it is gradually lost in a succession of purple mountains, is worth a halt of some time to enjoy. The steep banks opposite Logie, clothed with every variety of wood, are lovely, and give a new variety to the scene as we enter on the forests of Darnaway and Altyre. The wood-pigeon cooes and breeds in every nook and corner of the woods ; and towards evening the groves seem alive with the song of blackbirds and thrushes, varied now and then by the crow of the cock-pheasant, as he suns himself in all his glittering beauty on the dry and sheltered banks of the river.

“Still for many miles the river is shut in by extensive woods, and overhung by splendid fir, larch, and other trees ; while the nearly perpendicular rocks are clothed with the birch and the ladylike bird-cherry, the holly and the bright-berried mountain-ash growing out of every niche and cleft, and clinging by their serpent-like roots to the bare face of the rock, while in the dark, damp recesses of the stone grow most lovely varieties of pale-green ferns and other plants. In the more sunny places you meet

with the wild strawberry and purple fox-glove, the latter shooting up in graceful pyramids of flowers. Between Logie and Sluie are some of the highest rocks on the river, and from several hundred feet above it you can look straight down into the deep pools and foaming eddies below you. At a particular gorge, where the river rushes through a passage of very few feet in width, you will invariably see an old salmon-fisher perched on a point of rock, with his eye intent on the rushing cataract below him, and armed with a staff of some sixteen feet in length ending in a sharp hook, with which he strikes the salmon as they stop for a moment to rest in some eddy of the boiling torrent before taking their final leap up the fall. Watch for a few moments, and you will see the old man make a peculiar plunge and jerk with his long clip into the rushing water, and then hoisting it into the air he displays a struggling salmon impaled on the end of the staff, glancing like a piece of silver as it endeavours to escape. Perhaps it tumbles off the hook, and dropping into the water, floats wounded away to fall a prey to the otter or the fox in some shallow below. If, however, the fish is securely hooked, there ensues a struggle between it and the old man, who, by a twist of his stick, turns himself and the fish towards the dry rock; and having shaken the salmon off the hook, and despatched it with a blow from a short cudgel which he keeps for

the purpose, covers it carefully up with wet grass, and lowering the peak of his cap over his eyes, resumes his somewhat ticklish seat on the rock to wait for the next fish. On some days, when the water is of the right height, and the fish are numerous and inclined to run up the river, the old man catches a considerable number; though the capture of every fish is only attained by a struggle of life and death between man and salmon, for the least slip would send the former into the river, whence he could never come out alive. I never see him catch one without feeling fully convinced that he will follow the example of his predecessor in the place, who was washed away one fine day from the rock, and not found for some days, when his body was taken out of the river several miles below."

Just as Hal reached this point in his paper, the party in the harbour, who were all listening so intently to him, were interrupted by the approach of Matilda the housemaid, bearing in her hand one of those ominous-looking, brown-coloured envelopes so suggestive of important intelligence because known to contain a telegram. It was addressed to Uncle Fred. Instead, however, of his brow darkening or contracting, as the onlookers feared it might, he jumped up with a smile, and exclaimed, "What do you think it is?"

No one being sufficiently clever to guess immedi-

ately, Uncle Fred desired to enlighten them, as it was clearly his duty to do. "Do you give it up?" he asked, as if he had propounded a difficult conundrum.

"You've got a good stunning fortune left you," suggested saucy Tom merrily.

"Something twice as good, my dear boy."

"I suppose young ladies now-a-days don't accept gentlemen's offers by telegraph, do they?" questioned Mrs. Norton of Mrs. Meadows, with a comical look in her pleasant face. "Fred looks happy enough for even *that* to have happened."

"Wrong again," he answered, having evidently overheard her, as perhaps it was intended he should.

"Some ugly, wretchedly crooked business has got smoothed out and set straight?" queried Hal.

"Better even than that, Hal."

"Oh, Uncle Fred, do tell us!" said little Elsie: "are you invited out to tea?"

All laughed merrily at little Elsie's bright thought.

"Something nicer than a tea-party, even with pretty little tea-things, and little loaves, and little cakes, and great lumps of sugar, Elsie," said Uncle Fred. "Oh, by-the-by he'll be here presently!" he added abruptly, glancing again at the dingy-coloured missive.

"Who?" exclaimed Mrs. Meadows eagerly; "a visitor? Do tell me, Fred. I must see to a room being got ready. Who is coming?"

"Oliver."

"Oliver Jerningham?" queried Mrs. Meadows and Mrs. Norton in the same breath.

"Surely," answered Uncle Fred; "no other Oliver is Oliver to me, Oliver pure and simple."

"I thought he was in the Sierra Nevada—the remote regions of America," said Mrs. Meadows.

"So he was; but now it appears he is in England, and probably at this moment is dashing along in a cab and very near The Pines. Listen;" and Uncle Fred proceeded to read the telegram:—

"DEAR OLD FELLOW,—Have compassion on a friend, and take me in for two nights, that I may have the chance of a yarn with you. Am only in England for a fortnight. All else when we meet. Can't quite overtake the lightning, but I'll be after it soon. Meant to give you a sudden surprise, but reflected on the ladies, and that second thoughts are best."

"Just like him," said Mrs. Norton; "he always was, and always will be, all impulse."

"I say," said Tom to his brother and cousins, as they turned towards the house—the further reading of Hal's paper being postponed *sine die*, till they knew their visitor's plans—"wouldn't Mr. Jerningham be a fine fellow for a member of our F. and M. C.? Don't I wish we could get him into it, and persuade him to hold forth about the Sierra Nevada!"

"Good!" cried the boys in chorus.

"What are you plotting now?" inquired Uncle

Fred, turning round as the clear young voices in unison smote upon his ear.

"Not plotting, Uncle Fred," said Joe. "You're one of ourselves, you know; the Club was only unitedly wishing we could press one fresh from the mountains into our service."


"Oh! that is it, is it? Well, if Oliver *is*, as Oliver was," said Uncle Fred, laughing, "I promise myself and you another mountain story for our Club annals."

"Bravo! hip, hip, hurrah!" cried the lads.

Then they heard the noise of wheels, and a vehicle stopped outside the great doors. Uncle Fred was at them, and had flung them open before the cabman or his fare could do so, and had grasped the hand of a much-bearded, well-bronzed, handsome-looking man of about his own age, while he uttered the fervent exclamation, "God bless you, Oliver! I'm right glad to see you!"

CHAPTER VI

FOREST WIND-STORMS AND SQUIRRELS, MOUNTAIN MEADOWS AND PASSER.

“LL right, sonny,” said Oliver Jerningham to Joe. He had the Cornish fashion of calling boys he liked and wished to speak to in a sociable manner by that familiar and endearing epithet. “You’ve made arrangements for me to publish my memoirs, have you? And so you’ve come to interview me? Now, I tell you, though you’re the nephew of Fred Meadows, my chosen chum of thirty years, more or less—and he is the best man, as he was the best boy, in creation—I’m not going to be circumnavigated no-how. I’ve come to this here place to enjoy myself and rest myself; and to enjoy and rest I’m determined. But how can I do either the one or the other, if I suffer a lot of young scapegraces, whose own holidays are unconscionably long, to make me work for their amusement?”

Joe was not at all abashed by this apparently uncompromising refusal.

"We only want you, sir, to write down just a few of the wonderful things you have seen in your life in the forests and the mountains."

"Much obliged, I'm sure, for the honour," said Oliver Jerningham sarcastically. "Be so good as to fetch me two score of goose-quills, a ream of foolscap, blotting-paper to match, only rather more so, and a quart bottle of ink. I always believed in ink; nothing like a blot here and there, to prove you've been there, and to make it look official. Mind that, boy, when you get back to school,—a blot on a page here and there gives a sort of emphasis and elegance and distinction to the whole concern."

Joe laughed merrily. "Would you like me to fetch these things into the study, or here in the breakfast-room, sir?"

"Oh! into my own room," said Oliver Jerningham demurely; "and let the goose-quills be pointed with gold, and the foolscap tinted *couleur de rose*, as the Frenchmen put it. And bring me a pair of Moses' green spectacles, from Wakefield vicarage. I think I'm ready for them when I begin to write my experiences. The poet, historian, and travelling philosopher, mixed into one mighty whole, shall mount his Pegasus far from the gaze of mortal eye."

Still Joe laughed.

"Oh," said Oliver Jerningham, getting up and pacing up and down the room with the easy, swinging motion of a sailor on quarter-deck, "you're *that*

sort, are you, Joe Meadows? You don't believe a man when he's in earnest, eh?"

"Oh yes, I do, sir," replied Joe; "most certainly I do, *when*—"

"Worse and worse. You want to make it out that I'm telling lies."

"No, sir; you're only poking fun at me and teasing me. You mean to do what I want by-and-by."

Oliver Jerningham's face now wore a very comical expression—indeed, something between a laugh and a cry—as he answered, "*Do* I though? Not if I know it, Joe Meadows."

"I don't quite see how you could do it *without* knowing it," said Joe stolidly; "but I suppose you'll find out a way."

"You're as bad as a mosquito;—in fact you are a human mosquito: it's my business to annihilate you in the interests of mankind," said Oliver Jerningham, suddenly swooping round and catching the laughing, astonished boy in his firm grasp. "Now, mosquito, do you know your fate?"

"Death," said Joe demurely.

"No; worse—*torture*," said Oliver Jerningham.

At that moment a merry whistle and a step were heard outside; the door-handle turned, and Tom entered.

"Just in time, Master Tom, to see your mosquito cousin tortured."

"Tortured!" cried Tom, seeing there was some fun in hand. "What do you call him a mosquito for, sir?"

"Because he is one—a stinging, teasing, tormenting, worrying, annoying, human mosquito. He won't let me rest, won't let me meditate, won't let me be or do anything, but condemns me to the third verbal qualification, 'to *suffer*.'"

"I'm very sorry indeed," said Tom mockingly, "to hear such an account of my esteemed little coz, Joe Meadows; and I'm still more sorry, sir, to find you in a poor temper owing to his annoyance, because, sir, I come as a deputation from the members of the F. and M. C.—which, being interpreted, means Forest and Mountain Club—to beg that you would write for us some account—"

"A conspiracy, a conspiracy! 'my kingdom for a horse!'" shouted Oliver Jerningham, and shaking Joe from him desperately, he threw himself into an easy chair, plunged his head into its cushions, and groaned audibly.

Joe and Tom were in fits of laughter, when the door once more opened, and Hal came in.

"What's the row?" he cried; "I heard awful sounds of combat, and hasted to the fray. Who's who, and what's what, and is there any one else? What have you been doing to Uncle Fred's friend?"

"Ay, ay," sounded in a sepulchral voice from the depths of the velvet cushions; "what have they not

been doing to their Uncle Fred's friend? Better I had been the prey of the last wolf I saw and said good-bye to in 'old Californie'—better I had been drowned in 'Frisco' Bay before the ship steamed out of the harbour, than have lived to be the sport and gazing-stock of English youth."

Hal laughed now as much as anybody, before he found ability to respond to this touching and impassioned ejaculation.

"Will you be good enough, sir, to tell me how my cousin and brother have offended you, that I may, as the eldest representative of the family present, inflict condign and well-merited punishment upon them?"

"They're the paid (or otherwise) emissaries of a horrible secret society, as bad, in my opinion, as that established by the 'old man of the mountain,' and probably only a modern version of that select band of villains, for they come from a Forest and Mountain Club—ominous name! where else should *clubs* be but in a *forest*, and what else should they do with them but *mount*? the very name is suggestive of banditti—and they conjure me, they almost threaten me under pain of I know not what miserable penalty, to bring my deeds to their tribunal."

"Excuse me, dear sir," said Hal, in the mildest, mellowest, most gentlemanly of tones, as if he were a barrister anxious to calm down an excited but valuable witness, "and allow me to suggest that you have exaggerated the insult. I have myself come to plead

with you the cause of that very Forest and Mountain Club, and to beg that you will favour its members and friends with—”

“*Et tu, Brute!*” interrupted Oliver Jerningham pathetically, as he sank back in the easy-chair, and covered his face (all save his long bushy beard) with his outstretched hand.

And yet again the door opened; this time to admit Frank Norton.

“Oh, if you please, sir,” he began, advancing to the arm-chair, and not noticing the faces of the other boys, which might otherwise have been an amusing study, as they waited with suppressed laughter for this fourth attack upon the discomfited traveller.

As Frank stood gracefully by the easy-chair, and waited with some surprise for Mr. Jerningham to look up, the sense of the ridiculous smote so sharply upon Tom, that the choking laughter he had hitherto suppressed became no longer repressible, and he almost screamed with merriment.

At that noise Mr. Jerningham raised his head a little, suffered his eyes to alight upon Frank, exclaimed sharply, “The Philistines are upon thee, Samson!” and bowed forward, so as to shut out Frank’s figure from his sight.

“What on earth does this mean, and whatever are you all laughing about?” queried Frank. “What’s up?”

“Oh! oh! oh my! I can’t laugh any more; will

somebody be good enough to put an end to this? it's killing me," cried noisy Tom.

"What a comfort!" remarked Mr. Jerningham dryly, and set Tom off again in another ecstasy of fun.

Frank's cultivated air and anxiety to be polite, and ignorance of the antecedents, increased the drollery of the whole scene.

"I have been commissioned, sir," he began again—

"Of course you have," growled Oliver Jerningham; "commissioned to induce me to commit myself to paper in the interests of a tuppenny-ha'penny club, whose members (conceited young monkeys) choose to imagine that everybody must feel amazingly flattered and gratified to be asked to contribute to their amusement."

Frank coloured, and bit his lip. He was never so quick to see a joke as his brother and cousins, and he still mistook Mr. Jerningham's drollery for seriousness.

"Here," continued the latter, in a tone of injured innocence, "have I come to The Pines and to the friend of my youth and my manhood, to find, if possible, rest and repose; and no sooner am I fairly ensconced and domiciled than, one after another, no less than four young cannibals, each craving for his 'pound of flesh,' or, more correctly in this case, ounce of brain, come to invade my ease and the luxury of human life—idleness."

"I am very sorry, sir," said Frank in perfect good

faith, making Hal and Tom and Joe very merry indeed by his protracted obtuseness; "and if I had known that the others intended to ask you themselves, and had been refused, I should not have further imposed upon your time and good-nature. They ought to have let me know;" and he looked around rather reprovingly, only to meet laughing eyes and merry smiles.

"*You're a gentleman, Frank Norton,*" said Oliver Jerningham, raising himself in his chair and speaking earnestly. "I wish I could say as much for these grinning young rascals around. Tell me what *you* individually wish, sir, and I shall esteem it a favour to grant your request."

"It was the wish of all of us," said Frank gravely, and looking with unmistakable reproof in his expression at the other boys, which, of course, only intensified their mirth and caused it to explode in small outbursts of laughter, "that you should read us a paper about some of the forest or mountain scenes which you have beheld so often."

"I never write papers Master Frank; but if a yarn, home-spun in my own old-fashioned way, will be of any use, I shall be most happy to grant your request. It is such a comfort to me to find that my dear friend Fred Meadows has one really polite and amiable lad amongst his nephews, who knows how to ask a favour modestly, and not to hound you on to grant it willy-nilly."

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Then Frank's kind heart was touched for the honour of his brother and cousins.

"You must have mistaken them, sir; I'm sure they would not wish to be rude."

"Worse and worser," said Oliver Jerningham, with a sly glance at the other boys; "they can't help being rude then, even when they wish to be polite. But if you want to keep the precious words I may utter duly recorded in the wonderful annals of your equally wonderful club, I suppose one of you is master enough of shorthand to write down what I say."

"I am, sir," exclaimed Hal, with his bright smile.

"You can, can you? But can I trust you?"

"Hal's the very soul of honour," said Frank, still in perfect good faith.

"Oh, is he?" queried Mr. Jerningham. "I'm glad to hear it from you, else I might have doubted it."

"Please, sir, will you allow us to make you a member of our club?" asked Frank.

"Is there anything very awful and mysterious in the initiation—any drinking of blood or crunching of human bones? I hope not. But I think I'm too much afraid of you to join. I'll stay outside, and be only an *honorarium*; and a very rare one too you'll find me."

That very evening, the guests being hastily summoned, and Hal acting as reporter, Oliver Jerningham told the boys and the other usual members of the audience some of his adventures and experiences

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in the Sierra Nevada, which he summed up in what he called the poetic-coupletic title:—

Forest Wind-Storms and Squirrels,
Mountain Meadows and Passes.

I have no doubt, began Oliver Jerningham, that some of you dwellers in this antiquated Old World are conceited enough to imagine that you have felt the wind blow, and been out on windy days. Allow me to inform you that until you have been in the Yuba forests of the Sierra Nevada, you do not know what wind is. "After one has seen pines six feet in diameter bending like grasses before a mountain gale, and ever and anon some giant falling with a crash that shakes the hills, it seems astonishing that any, save the lowest thick-set trees, could ever have found a period sufficiently stormless to establish themselves, or, once established, that they should not, sooner or later, have been blown down. But when the storm is over, and we behold the same forests tranquil again, towering fresh and unscathed in erect majesty, and consider what centuries of storms have fallen upon them since they were first planted—hail to break the tender seedlings; lightning to scorch and shatter; snow, winds, and avalanches to crush and overwhelm—while the manifest result of all this wild storm-culture is the glorious perfection we behold, then faith in Nature's forestry is established, and we cease to deplore the violence of her most destructive gales, or of any other storm-implement whatever.

“There are two trees in the Sierra forests that are never blown down so long as they continue in sound health. These are the Alpine juniper and the dwarf *Pinus albicaulis* of the summit peaks. Their stiff, crooked roots grip the storm-beaten ledges like eagles’ claws, while their lithe, cord-like branches bend round compliantly, offering but a slight hold for any wind. The other Alpine conifers — *Pinus aristata*, the mountain pine, and the Williamson spruce—on account of their admirable toughness and the closeness of their growth, are never thinned out by this agent to any destructive extent. The same is, in general, true of the giants of the lower zones. The kingly sugar-pine towers aloft to a height of more than two hundred feet, offering a fine mark to storm-winds; but it is not densely foliated, and its long, horizontal arms swing round compliantly in the blast, like tresses of green fluent algæ in a brook; while the silver firs in most places keep their ranks well together in united strength. The yellow or silver pine is more frequently overturned than any other tree on the Sierra, because its leaves and branches form the largest mass in proportion to its height, while in many places it is planted sparsely, leaving long open lanes through which storms may enter with full force. Furthermore, because it is distributed along the lower portion of the range, which was the first to be left bare on the breaking up of the ice-sheet at the close of the glacial winter, the soil it is growing

upon has been longer exposed to post-glacial weathering, and consequently is in a more crumbling, decayed condition than the fresher soils further up the range, and offers a less secure anchorage for the roots."

[At this point Oliver Jerningham motioned to Hal to stop his reporting pencil, and said, "I want to make it generally known that I'm amenable to common sense."

"Who doubted it? was the doubt inborn?" questioned Uncle Fred laughing.

Oliver Jerningham cast a look of contempt upon his friend that might have withered him had it been genuine, and continued, "If any one wants to ask a question as I talk, let him do it, and he won't put me out. The only person he'll put out is the reporter; and I should say, therefore, that, to make all fair, the reporter had better put him *down*. Now, Hal, we'll go ahead again."]

"While exploring the forest zones of Mount Shasta, I discovered the path of a hurricane strewn with thousands of pines of this species. Great and small had been uprooted or wrenched off by sheer force, making a clean gap like that made by a snow avalanche. But hurricanes capable of doing this class of work are rare in the Sierra; and when we have explored the forest belts from one extremity of the range to the other, we are compelled to believe that they are the most beautiful on the face of the earth,

however we may regard the agents that have made them so.

"However restricted the scope of other forest influences, that of the winds is universal. They go to every tree; not one is forgotten: the mountain pine, towering with outstretched arms upon the rugged buttresses of the Alps, the lowliest and most retiring tenant of the dells—they seek and find them all, caressing them tenderly, bending them in lusty exercise, stimulating their growth, plucking off a leaf or a limb, or removing an entire tree or grove; now whispering and cooing through their branches like a dreamy child, now roaring like the ocean. The wind blessing the forest, the forest the wind, with ineffable beauty, as the sure result.

"There is always something deeply exciting, not only in the sounds of winds in the woods, which exert more or less influence over every mind, but in their varied, water-like flow, as manifested by the movements of the trees, especially those of the conifers. By no other are they rendered so extensively and impressibly visible, not even by the lordly tropic palms, or tree-ferns responsive to the gentlest breeze. The waving of a forest of the giant *Sequoias* is indescribably sublime; but the pines seem to me the best interpreters of winds. They are mighty waving golden-rods, ever in tune, singing and writing wind-music all their long century lives. Little, however, of this noble tree-waving and tree-music will

you see or hear in the strictly Alpine portion of the forests. The burly juniper, whose girth sometimes more than equals its height, is about as rigid as the rock on which it grows. The slender, lash-like sprays of the dwarf-pine stream out in wavering ripples, but the tallest and slenderest are far too unyielding to wave even in the heaviest gales. They only shake in quick, short vibrations. The Williamson spruce, however, and the mountain pine and some of the tallest thickets of the two-leaved species, bow in storms with considerable scope and gracefulness. But it is only in the lower and middle zones that the meeting of winds and woods is to be seen in all its grandeur.

“ One of the most beautiful and exhilarating storms I ever enjoyed occurred in December 1874, when I happened to be exploring one of the tributary valleys of the Yuba. The sky and the ground and the trees had been thoroughly rain-washed, and were dry again. The day was intensely pure—one of those incomparable bits of California winter, warm and balmy, and full of white, sparkling sunshine, redolent of all the purest influences of the spring, and at the same time enlivened with one of the most cordial wind-storms conceivable. Instead of camping out, as I usually do, I then chanced to be stopping at the house of a friend. But when the storm began to sound, I lost no time in pushing out into the woods to enjoy it. For on such occasions nature has always

something rare to show us, and the danger to life and limb is hardly greater than one would experience crouching deprecatingly beneath a roof.

"It was still early morning when I found myself fairly adrift. Delicious sunshine came pouring over the hills, lighting the tops of the pines, and setting free a steam of summery fragrance that contrasted strangely with the wild tones of the storm. The air was mottled with pine tassels and bright green plumes, that went flashing past in the sunlight like pursued birds. But there was not the slightest dustiness—nothing less pure than leaves, and ripe pollen, and flecks of withered bracken and moss. Trees were heard falling for hours, at the rate of one every two or three minutes: some uprooted, partly on account of the loose, water-soaked condition of the ground; others broken straight across, where some weakness caused by fire had determined the spot. The gestures of the various trees made a delightful study. Young sugar-pines, light and feathery as squirrel-tails, were bowing almost to the ground; while the grand old patriarchs, whose massive boles had been tried in a hundred storms, waved solemnly above them, their long arching branches streaming fluently on the gale, and every needle thrilling and ringing, and shedding off keen lances of light like a diamond. The Douglass spruces, with long sprays drawn out in level tresses, and needles massed in a gray shimmering glow, presented a most striking ap-

pearance as they stood in bold relief along the hill-tops; and so did the madronas in the dells, with their red bark and bowed glossy leaves tilted every way, reflecting the sunshine in throbbing spangles, like those one so often sees on the rippled surface of a glacier lake. But the silver pines were now the most impressively beautiful of all. Colossal spires two hundred feet in height waved like supple golden-rods, chanting and bowing low as if in worship, while the whole mass of their long, tremulous foliage was kindled into one continuous blaze of white sun-fire.

"The force of the gale was such that the most steadfast monarch of them all rocked down to its roots with a motion plainly perceptible when one leaned against it. Nature was holding high festival, and every fibre of the most rigid giants thrilled with glad excitement

"I drifted on, through the midst of this passionate music and motion, across many a glen, from ridge to ridge, often halting in the lee of a rock for shelter, or to gaze and listen. Even when the grand anthem had swelled to its highest pitch, I could distinctly hear the varying tones of individual trees—spruce, and fir, and pine, and leafless oak, and even the infinitely gentle rustle of the withered grasses at my feet.

"Toward mid-day, after a long, tingling scramble through copses of hazel and ceanothus, I gained the summit of the highest ridge in the neighbourhood;

and then it occurred to me that it would be a fine thing to climb one of the trees, to obtain a wider outlook, and get my ear close to the *Æolian* music of its topmost needles. But, under the circumstances, the choice of a tree was a serious matter."

"How could you be so rash?" Mrs. Meadows exclaimed involuntarily.

"I had no kind lady friend to counsel me more wisely," returned Oliver Jerningham smiling.]

"One tree, whose instep was not very strong, seemed in danger of being blown down, or of being struck by others in case they should fall; another was branchless to a considerable height above the ground, and at the same time too large to be grasped with arms and legs in climbing; while others were not favourably situated for clear views. After thus cautiously casting about, I made choice of the tallest of a group of Douglass spruces that were growing close together like a tuft of grass, no one of which seemed likely to fall unless all the rest fell with it. Though comparatively young, they were about a hundred feet high; and their lithe brushy tops were rocking and swirling in wild ecstasy. Being accustomed to climb trees in making botanical studies, I experienced no difficulty in reaching the top of this one; and never before did I enjoy so noble an exhilaration of motion. The slender tops fairly flapped and swished in the passionate torrent, bending and swirling backward and forward, round and round,

tracing indescribable combinations of vertical and horizontal curves ; while I clung with muscles firmly braced, like a bobolink on a reed.

“ In its widest sweeps my tree-top described an arc of from twenty to thirty degrees ; but I felt sure of its elastic temper, having seen others of the same species still more severely tried—bent almost to the ground indeed, in heavy snows, without breaking a fibre. I was therefore safe, and free to take the wind into my pulses, and enjoy the excited forest from my grand outlook.....The quantity of light reflected from the bent needles was so great as to make whole groves appear as if covered with snow, while the black shadows beneath the trees greatly enhanced the effect of the silvery splendour. Excepting only the shadows, there was nothing sombre in all this wild sea of pines. On the contrary, notwithstanding this was the winter season, the colours were remarkably beautiful. The shafts of the pine and libocedrus were brown and purple, and most of the foliage was well tinged with yellow ; and the laurel groves, with the pale under-sides of their leaves turned upward, made masses of gray. And then there were many a dash of chocolate colour from clumps of manzanita, and many a jet of vivid crimson from the bark of the madronas ; while the ground on the hill-sides, appearing here and there through openings between the groves, displayed masses of pale purple and brown.

"The sounds of the storm corresponded gloriously with this wild exuberance of light and motion: the profound bass of the naked branches and boles booming like waterfalls; the quick, tense vibrations of the pine needles, now rising to a shrill whistling hiss, now falling to a silky murmur; the rustling of laurel groves in the dells, and the keen metallic click of leaf on leaf—all heard in easy analysis when the attention was calmly bent.

"I kept my lofty perch for hours, frequently closing my eyes to enjoy the music by itself, or to feast quietly on the delicious fragrance that was streaming past. It was less marked than that during warm rain, when so many balsamic buds and leaves are steeped like tea; but, from the chafing of rosinny branches against one another, and the incessant attrition of myriads of needles, the gale was spiced to a very tonic degree.

"Winds are advertisements of all they touch, however much or little we may be able to read them, telling their wanderings even by their scents alone. Mariners detect the flowery perfume of land-winds far at sea; and sea-winds carry the fragrance of dulse and tangle far inland, where it is quickly recognized, though mingled with the scents of a thousand land-flowers.

"Most people like to look at mountain rivers, and bear them in mind; but few care to look at the winds, though far more beautiful and sublime, and though

they become at times about as visible as flowing water. When the north winds in winter are making upward sweeps over the curving summits of the Alps, the fact is sometimes published with flying banners half a mile long. And when we look around over an agitated forest, we may see something of the wind that stirs it, by its effects upon the trees.

"We all travel the Milky Way together, trees and men, but it never occurred to me until that storm-day, while swinging in the wind, that trees are travellers in the ordinary sense. They make many journeys—not very extensive ones, it is true, but our own little comes and goes are only little more than tree-wavings, many of them not so much.

"When the storm began to abate, I dismounted, and sauntered down through the calming woods. The storm-tones died away, and turning towards the east, I beheld the countless hosts of the forests hushed and tranquil, towering one above another on the slopes of the hills like a devout audience. The setting sun filled them with amber light, and seemed to say, while they listened, 'My peace I give unto you.'"

And now, resumed Oliver Jerningham, after the pause which followed his description of a wind-storm, allow me to introduce you to a little favourite of mine, the Douglass squirrel of these same regions and these same forests. "He is by far the most interesting and influential of all the Californian Sciuridæ, sur-

passing every other species in force of character, numbers, extent of range, and in the amount of influence he brings to bear upon the health and distribution of the vast forests he inhabits.

"Go where you will, you everywhere find this little squirrel the master existence. Though only a few inches long, so intense are his fiery vigour and restlessness, he stirs every grove with wild life, and makes himself more important than even the huge bears that shuffle through the tangled underbrush beneath him. Every wind is fretted by his voice; almost every bole and branch feels the sting of his sharp feet. How much the growth of the trees is stimulated by this means it is not easy to learn, but his action in manipulating their seeds is more appreciable. Nature has made him master-forester, and committed almost the whole of her coniferous crops to his paws. Probably over fifty per cent. of all the cones ripened on the Sierra are cut off and handled by the Douglass alone, and of those of the big trees (*Sequoia gigantea*) forming an interrupted belt nearly two hundred miles long, perhaps ninety per cent. pass through his hands. The greater portion is of course stored away for food during the winter and spring, but some of them are tucked separately into holes and loosely covered, where they germinate and become trees.

"From the nose to the root of the tail the Douglass measures about eight inches; and his tail, which

he so effectively uses in interpreting his feelings, is about six inches in length. He wears dark bluish gray over the back and half way down the sides, bright buff under, with a stripe of dark gray, nearly black, separating the upper and under colours. This dividing stripe, however, is not very sharply defined. He has long black whiskers, which give him a rather fierce look when observed closely, strong claws, sharp as fish-hooks, and the brightest of bright eyes, full of telling speculation.

"A King's River Indian told me that they call him 'pillilooceet,' which, rapidly pronounced with the first syllable heavily accented, is not unlike the lusty exclamation he utters on his way up a tree when excited. Most mountaineers in California call him the pine-squirrel; and when I asked an old trapper whether he knew our little forester, he replied with brightening countenance:—'Oh yes, of course I know him—everybody knows him. When I'm hunting in the woods, I often find out where the deer are by his barking at them. I call 'em lightnin' squirrels, because they're so mighty quick and peert.'

"All the true squirrels are more or less bird-like in speech and movements; but the Douglass is pre-eminently so, possessing, as he does, every attribute peculiarly squirrelish enthusiastically concentrated. He is the squirrel of squirrels, flashing from branch to branch of his favourite evergreens, crisp and

glossy, and undiseased as a sunbeam. Give him wings, and he would outfly any bird in the woods. He leaps and glides in hidden strength, seemingly as independent of common muscles as a mountain stream. He threads the tasseled branches of the pines, stirring their needles like a rustling breeze; now shooting across openings in arrowy lines, now launching in curves, glinting deftly from side to side in sudden zigzags, and swirling in giddy loops and spirals around the knotty trunks, getting into what seem to be the most impossible situations without sense of danger; now on his haunches, now on his head, yet ever graceful, and punctuating his most irrepressible outbursts of energy with little dots and dashes of perfect repose. He is, without exception, the wildest animal I ever saw,—a fiery, sputtering little bolt of life, luxuriating in quick oxygen and the wood's best juices. One can hardly think of such a creature being dependent, like the rest of us, on climate and food.....His busiest time is the Indian summer. Then he gathers burs and hazel-nuts, like a plodding farmer, working continuously every day for hours, saying not a word; cutting off the ripe cones at the top of his speed, as if employed by the job, and examining every branch in regular order, as if careful that not one should escape him; then, descending, he stores them away beneath logs and stumps, in anticipation of the pinching-hunger days of winter. He seems himself a kind of coniferous

fruit—both fruit and flower. The rosinny essences of the pines pervade every pore of his body; and eating his flesh is like chewing gum."

["Oh! how *can* you eat him, little beauty?" said Fanny Norton.

"Hunger makes people do many disagreeable things, Fanny," said Oliver Jerningham.]

"One never tires of this bright chip of nature—this brave little voice crying in the wilderness—observing his many works and ways, and listening to his curious language. His musical, piny gossip is savoury to the ear as balsam to the palate; and though he has not exactly the gift of song, some of his notes are as sweet as those of a linnet, almost flute-like in softness, while others prick and tingle like thistles. He is the mocking-bird of squirrels, pouring forth mixed chatter and song like a perennial fountain—barking like a dog, screaming like a hawk, whistling like a blackbird, and chirping like a sparrow, while in bluff audacious noisiness he is a jay.

"In descending the trunk of a tree with the intention of alighting on the ground, he preserves a cautious silence, mindful perhaps of foxes and wild cats; but there is no end to his capers and noise while rocking safely at home. And woe to the gray squirrel or chipmunk that ventures to set foot on his favourite tree! No matter how slyly they trace the furrows of the bark, they are speedily discovered and kicked downstairs with comic vehemence, while

a torrent of angry notes comes rushing from his whiskered lips. He will even attempt at times to drive away dogs and men, especially if he has had no previous knowledge of them. Seeing a man for the first time, he approaches nearer and nearer, until within a few feet; then, with an angry outburst, he makes a sudden rush, all teeth and eyes, as if about to eat you up. But finding that the big animal doesn't scare worth a nut, he prudently beats a retreat, and sets himself up to reconnoitre on some overhanging branch, scrutinizing every movement you make with ludicrous solemnity. Gathering courage, he ventures down the trunk again, churring and chirping and jerking nervously up and down in curious loops, eying you all the time, as if showing off and demanding your admiration. Finally growing calmer, he settles down in a comfortable posture on some horizontal branch commanding a good view, and beats time with his tail to a steady 'Cheéup, cheéup!' or, when somewhat less excited, 'Peéah!' with the first syllable keenly accented, and the second drawn out like the scream of a hawk,—repeating this slowly and more emphatically at first, then gradually faster, until a rate of about a hundred and fifty words a minute is reached."

[The boys laughed heartily at the squirrel's eloquence.]

"It is remarkable, too," continued Mr. Jerningham, "that though articulating distinctly, he keeps his

mouth shut most of the time and speaks through his nose.

"While ascending trees, all his claws come into play; but in descending, the weight of his body is sustained chiefly by those of the hind feet: still, in neither case do his movements suggest effort, though if you are near enough you may see the bulging strength of his short, bear-like arms, and note his sinewy fists clenched in the bark. Whether going up or down, he carries his tail extended at full length in line with his body, unless it be required for gestures. But while running along horizontal limbs or fallen trunks, it is frequently folded forward over the back, with the airy tip daintily upcurled. In cool weather it keeps him warm. Then, after he has finished his meal, you may see him couched close on some level limb, with his blanket neatly spread and reaching forward to his ears, the electric, outstanding hairs quivering in the breeze like pine-needles. But in wet or in very cold weather he stays in his nest; and while curled up there, his comforter is long enough to come forward around his nose. It is seldom so cold, however, as to prevent his going out to his stores when hungry.

"Once, while making a winter ascent of Mount Shasta, I lay storm-bound on the extreme upper edge of the timber-line for three days; and while the thermometer stood nearly at zero, and the sky was thick with driving snow, a Douglass came

bravely out several times from one of the lower hollows of a dwarf-pine, faced the wind without seeming to feel it much, frisked lightly about over the mealy snow, and dug his way down to some hidden seeds with wonderful precision, as if to his eyes the thick snow-covering were glass.

"No other of the Sierra animals of my acquaintance is better fed. His food consists of hazel-nuts, chinquapins, and the nuts and seeds of all the coniferous trees without exception; and they all agree with him, green or ripe. No cone is too large for him to manage, none so small as to be beneath his notice. The smaller ones he cuts off and eats on a branch of the tree, without allowing them to fall, beginning at the bottom of the cone and cutting away the scales to expose the seeds—not gnawing by guess, like a bear, but turning them round and round in regular order, in compliance with their spiral arrangement.

"The immense size of the cones of the sugar-pine—from sixteen to twenty inches in length—compels him to adopt quite a different method to obtain them. He cuts them off without attempting to hold them; then he goes down and drags them from where they have chanced to fall up to the bare swelling ground around the instep of the tree, where he demolishes them in the same methodical way. From a single sugar-pine cone he gets from two to four hundred seeds about half the size of a hazel-nut, so that in

a few minutes he can procure enough to last a week. Both species of his food are filled with an exceedingly pungent aromatic oil, which spices all his flesh, and is of itself sufficient to account for his lightning energy. You may easily know this little workman by his chips. On sunny hill-sides, around the principal trees, they lie in big piles, bushels and basketfuls of them, all fresh and clean.

"He feasts on all the species long before they are ripe, but is wise enough to wait until they are fully matured before he gathers them into his barns. This is in October and November, which with him are the two busiest months of the year. All kinds of burs, big and little, are now cut off and showered down alike, and the ground is speedily covered with them. A constant thudding and bumping is kept up; some of the larger cones chancing to fall on old logs make the forest re-echo with the sound. Other nut-eaters less industrious know well what is going on, and hasten to carry away the cones as they fall. But however busy the harvester may be, he is not slow to descry the pilferers below, and instantly leaves his work to drive them away. The little, striped *tamias* is a thorn in his flesh, stealing persistently, punish him as he may. The large gray squirrel gives trouble also, although the Douglass has been accused of stealing from him. Generally, however, just the opposite is the case.

"The excellence of the Sierra evergreens is beginning to be well known, consequently there is a considerable demand for their seeds. The greater portion of the supply is procured by chopping down the trees in the more accessible sections of the forests alongside of bridle-paths that cross the range. Most of the trees, however, are of so gigantic a size that the seedsmen have to look for the greater portion of their supplies to the Douglass, who soon learns that he is no match for these freebooters. He is wise enough, however, to cease working the instant he perceives them; and never fails to embrace every opportunity to recover his burs whenever they happen to be in any place accessible to him, and the busy seedsmen often find on returning to camp that the little Douglass has very exhaustively spoiled the spoiler. I know one seed-gatherer, who, whenever he robs the squirrels, scatters wheat or barley beneath the trees as conscience-money."

["I like that man," said little Elsie softly.

"So do I, Elsie," said Oliver Jerningham.]

"The want of appreciable life remarked by so many travellers in the Sierra forests, is never felt at this time of year. Banish all the humming insects, and the birds and quadrupeds, leaving only Sir Douglass, and the most solitary of our so-called solitudes would still throb with ardent life. But if you should go impatiently, even into the most populous of the groves on purpose to meet him, and walk about, look-

ing up among the branches, you will see very little of him. You should lie down at the foot of one of the trees, and he will come; for, in the midst of the ordinary forest sounds—the falling of burs, the piping of quails, the screams of the Clark crow, and the rustling of deer and birds—he is quick to detect your strange footsteps, and will hasten to make a good, close inspection of you as soon as you are still. First, you may hear him sounding a few notes of curious inquiry; but more likely the first intimation of his approach will be the prickly sounds of his feet as he descends the tree overhead, just before he makes his savage onrush to frighten you and proclaim your presence to every other squirrel and bird in the neighbourhood.”

[The children all laughed. “What a comical little customer!” cried Tom. “I like his courage first-rate.”]

“If you are now capable of remaining perfectly motionless, he will make a nearer and nearer approach, and probably set your flesh atingle by frisking across your body.”

[“Shouldn’t I like to feel the little gentleman, and make a grab at him,” said Tom.]

“Once, while seated at the foot of a Williamson spruce,” continued the traveller, “in one of the most inaccessible of the San Joaquin Yosemite, engaged in sketching, a reckless fellow came up behind me, passed under my bended arm, and jumped on my paper.”

["Cool, very!" remarked Hal.]

"And while an old friend of mine was reading one warm afternoon out in the shade of his cabin, one of his Douglass neighbours jumped from the gable upon his head, then with admirable assurance ran down over his shoulder and on to the book he held in his hand. Our Douglass enjoys a large social circle; for, besides his numerous relatives, he maintains intimate relations with the nut-eating birds, particularly the Clark crow—*Picicorvus columbianus*—and the numerous woodpeckers and jays. The two spermophiles are astonishingly abundant in the lowlands and lower foot-hills, but more and more sparingly distributed up through the Douglass domains, seldom venturing higher than six or seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. The gray sciurus ranges but little higher than this. The little striped tamias alone is associated with him everywhere.

"In the lower and middle zones, where they all meet, they are tolerably harmonious—a happy family, though very amusing skirmishes may occasionally be witnessed. Wherever the ancient glaciers that once loaded the range spread forest soil, there you find our little hero, most abundant where depth of soil and genial climate have given rise to a corresponding luxuriance in the trees, but following every kind of growth up the curving moraines to the edge of the highest glacial fountains.

"I cannot begin to tell how much he has cheered

my lonely wanderings during all the years I have been pursuing my studies in these glorious wilds, or how much unmistakable humanity I have found in him. Take this for example. One calm, creamy Indian summer morning, when the nuts were ripe, I was camped in the upper pine-woods of the south fork of the San Joaquin, where the squirrels seemed to be about as plentiful as the ripe burs. They were taking an early breakfast before going to their regular harvest work. While I was busy with my own breakfast I heard the thudding fall of two or three heavy cones from a yellow pine near me, and stole noiselessly forward within about twenty feet of the base of it to observe. In a few moments down came the Douglass. The breakfast-burs he had cut off had rolled on the gently sloping ground into a clump of ceanothus bushes; but he seemed to know exactly where they were, for he found them at once, apparently without searching for them. They were more than twice as heavy as himself, but after turning them into the right position for getting a good hold with his long sickle teeth, he managed to drag them up to the foot of the tree he had cut them from, moving backward. Then seating himself comfortably, he held them on end, bottom up, and demolished them with easy rapidity. A good deal of nibbling had to be done before he got anything to eat, because the lower scales are barren; but when he had patiently worked his way up to the fertile ones, he found two

sweet nuts at the base of each, shaped like trimmed hams, and purple spotted like birds' eggs. And notwithstanding these cones were dripping with soft balsam, and covered with prickles, and so strongly put together that a boy would be puzzled to cut them open with a jack-knife, he accomplished his meal with easy dignity and cleanliness, making less effort apparently than a man would in eating soft cookery from a plate.

"Breakfast done, I thought I would whistle a tune for him before he went to work, curious to see how he would be affected by it. He had not seen me all this while; but the instant I began he darted up the tree nearest to him, and came out on a small dead limb opposite me, and composed himself to listen. I sang and whistled more than a dozen tunes; and as the music changed, his eyes sparkled, and he turned his head quickly from side to side, but he made no other response. Other squirrels, hearing the strange sounds, came around on all sides; chipmunks, also, and birds. One of the birds, a handsome speckle-breasted thrush, seemed even more interested than the squirrels. After listening for a while on one of the lower dead sprays of a pine, he came swooping forward within a few feet of my face, where he remained fluttering in the air for half a minute or so, sustaining himself with whirring wing-beats, like a humming-bird in front of a flower, while I could look into his eyes and see his innocent wonder."

["What a beautiful congregation!" said Joe.]

"By this time my performance must have lasted nearly half an hour. I sang or whistled 'Bonnie Doon,' 'Lass o' Gowrie,' 'O'er the Water to Charlie,' 'Bonnie Woods o' Craigie Lee,' etc.,—all of which seemed to be listened to with bright interest, my first Douglass sitting patiently through it all, with his telling eyes fixed upon me, until I ventured to give the 'Old Hundred,' when he screamed his Indian name, 'pillilooeet,' turned tail, and darted with ludicrous haste up the tree out of sight, his voice and actions in the case leaving a somewhat profane impression, as if he had said, 'I'll be hanged if you get me to hear anything so solemn and unpiny.'"

[Mr. Jerningham's audience were all amused at this ridiculous anecdote.]

"This acted," he continued, "as a signal for the general dispersion of the whole hairy tribe, though the birds seemed willing to wait further developments, music being naturally more in their line.

"No one who makes the acquaintance of our forester will fail to admire him; but he is far too self-reliant and warlike ever to be taken for a darling."

["I should like to take him for a darling," said little Elsie. "I think he's *such a dear* little fellow."

"*He* wouldn't enjoy your petting, Elsie," said Frank; "you would make him unhappy."

Elsie sighed heavily. Before Frank said that, she

had intended to ask Mr. Jerningham to capture a Douglass squirrel for her.]

"I have no idea how long he lives," continued the traveller. "It is difficult, indeed, to realize that so condensed a piece of sun-fire should ever become dim or die at all. He is seldom killed by hunters, for he is too small to encourage much of their attention, and when pursued in settled regions becomes excessively shy, and keeps close in the furrows of the highest trunks, many of which are of the same colour as himself. Indian boys, however, lie in wait with unbounded patience to shoot them with arrows. A few fall a prey to rattlesnakes in the lower and middle zones. Occasionally he is pursued by wild cats, etc. But, upon the whole, he dwells safely in the deep bosom of the woods, the most highly-favoured of all his happy tribe. May his tribe increase!"

["That's all I've got to say about the Douglass squirrel," said Oliver Jerningham. "Aren't you tired of a traveller's stories yet?"]

He might well ask the question, for there was no appearance of inattention or dulness on the face even of the very youngest of his listeners. On the contrary, all had the attent and pleased air of those who listen to what charms them, and who long that the story or tale or song shall not be abruptly concluded.

"I feel flattered," said the traveller; "but I won't stay to tell you how much, but go on instead to give you some idea of the glacier meadows of the Sierra."]

“What I regard as the typical glacier meadow is formed by the filling in of a glacier lake, and is found only in the Alpine region of the Sierra, at a height of from about eight thousand to nine thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea. The general surface is nearly as level as the lake which it has replaced, and is perfectly free from rock-heaps and the frouzy roughness of rank, coarse-leaved, weedy, or shrubby vegetation. The sod is close and silky, and so complete that you cannot see the ground; warm, also, and everywhere free from mossy bogginess; and so brilliantly enamelled with flowers and butterflies that it may well be called a garden-meadow or meadow-garden—for the plushy sod is in many places so crowded with gentians, daisies, ivesias, and various species of orthocarpus, that the grass is scarcely noticeable, while in others the flowers are only pricked in here and there singly or in small ornamental rosettes.

“The most influential of the grasses composing the sod is a delicate calamagrostis, with fine filiform leaves and loose airy panicles that seem to float above the flowery lawn like a lovely mist. But, talk as I may, I cannot give anything like an adequate idea of the exquisite beauty of those mountain carpets as they lie smoothly outspread in the savage wilderness. One may at first sight compare them with the carefully-tended lawns of pleasure-grounds; for they are as free from diversifying weeds as they, and as smooth.

But here the likeness ends; for our wild lawns, with all their exquisite fineness, have no trace of that painful, licked, snipped, repressed appearance that pleasure-ground lawns are apt to have, even when viewed at a distance."

No offence to you, young sirs, said Oliver Jer-ningham, breaking off from his narrative to look round mischievously at the lads; you do cut and roll the grass very well indeed here at The Pines; but you can't, do what you will, imitate or come up to the beauty of Sierra meadows. "Not to mention the flowers with which they are brightened, their grasses are infinitely finer both in colour and texture; and instead of lying flat and motionless, matted together like a dead green cloth, they respond to the touches of every breeze, rejoicing in pure wildness—blooming and fruiting in the vital light.

"On the head-waters of the rivers there are what are called 'big meadows'—usually about from five to ten miles long. These occupy the basins of the ancient ice-seas, where many tributary glaciers come together to form the grand trunks. Most, however, are quite small, averaging perhaps but little more than three-fourths of a mile in length. Imagine yourself at the Tuolumne soda springs, on the bank of the river, a day's journey above Yosemite Valley. You set off northward through a forest that stretches away indefinitely before you, seemingly unbroken by openings of any kind. As soon as you are fairly into

the woods, the gray mountain peaks, with their snowy gorges and hollows, are lost to view. The ground is littered with fallen trunks, that lie crossed and recrossed like storm-lodged wheat; and besides this close growth of pines, the rich moraine soil supports a luxuriant growth of ribbon-leaved grasses, chiefly bromus, triticum, and agrostis, which rear their handsome spikes and panicles above your waist. Making your way through this fertile wilderness—finding lively bits of interest now and then in the squirrels and Clark crows, and perchance in a deer or a bear—after the lapse of an hour or two, vertical bars of sunshine are seen ahead between the brown shafts of the pines; and then you suddenly emerge from the forest shadows upon a delightful purple lawn lying smooth and free in the light like a lake. This is a glacier meadow. It is about a mile and a half long, by a quarter of a mile wide. The trees come pressing forward all around in close serried ranks, planting their feet exactly on its margin, and holding themselves erect, strict, and orderly, like soldiers on parade; thus bounding the meadow with exquisite precision, yet with free curving lines such as nature alone can draw. With inexpressible delight you wade out into the grassy sun-lake, feeling yourself contained in one of nature's most sacred chambers, withdrawn from the sterner influences of the mountains, secure from all intrusion, secure from yourself, free in the universal beauty. And notwithstanding the scene is so im-

pressively spiritual, and you seem dissolved in it, yet everything about you is beating with warm, terrestrial, human love, delightfully substantial and familiar. The rosiny pines are types of health and steadfastness; the robins feeding on the sod belong to the same species you have known since childhood; and surely these are the very friend-flowers of the old home garden. Bees hum as in a harvest noon, butterflies waver about the flowers, and like them you lave in the vital sunshine, too richly and homogeneously joy-filled to be capable of partial thought. You are all eye, sifted through and through with light and beauty. Sauntering along the brook that meanders silently through the meadow from the east, special flowers call you back to discriminating consciousness. The sod comes curving down to the water's edge, forming bossy outswelling banks, and in some places overlapping glacier boulders and forming bridges. Here you find mats of the curious dwarf-willow, scarce an inch high, yet sending up a multitude of gray silky catkins, illumined here and there with the purple cups and bells of bryanthus and vaccinium. Go where you may, you everywhere find the lawn intensely beautiful, as if nature had fingered and adjusted every plant that very day. In the brightest places you find three species of gentians with different shades of blue; daisies pure as the ether; silky-leaved ivesias with warm yellow flowers; several species of orthocarpus with blunt, bossy-headed spikes, red and

purple and yellow; the Alpine golden-rod, pedicularis, and clover, fragrant and honeyful, and with their fine colours massed and blended like those of the rainbow. Beneath the lowest leaves you discover a fairy realm of mosses; their precious spore-cups poised daintily on polished shafts, curiously hooded or open, showing the richly ornate peristomas worn like royal crowns. Creeping liverworts are here also in lavish abundance, and several rare species of fungi. Caterpillars, black beetles, and ants roam the wilds of this lower world, making their way through miniature groves and thickets like bears in a thick wood; while every leaf and flower seems to have its winged representative overhead."

["Fanny," said Mrs. Norton, addressing her daughter, "this is as pretty as the fairy tales you are so fond of, and yet it is all true."]

"Dragon-flies shoot in vigorous zigzags through the dancing swarms, and a rich profusion of butterflies—the leguminosæ of insects—make a fine addition to the general show. Humming-birds, too, are quite common here; and the robin is always found along the margin of the stream, or out in the shallowest portions of the sod. Swallows skim the grassy lake from end to end; fly-catchers come and go in fitful flights from the top of dead spars; while woodpeckers swing across from side to side in graceful festoon curves.

"The summer life we have been depicting lasts with but little abatement until October, when

the night-frosts begin to sting keenly, bronzing the grasses, and ripening the creeping heathworts along the banks of the stream to a reddish purple and crimson; while the flowers disappear, all save the golden-rods and a few daisies, that continue to bloom on unscathed until the beginning of snowy winter. In still nights the grass panicles and every leaf and stalk are laden with frost crystals, through which the morning sunbeams sift in ravishing splendour, transforming each to a precious diamond radiating all the colours of the rainbow. The brook shallows are plaited across and across with slender lances of ice; but both these and the grass crystals are melted before mid-day. The divine alpenglow flushes the forest every evening, followed by a crystal night with hosts of lily stars, whose size and brilliancy cannot be conceived by those who have never risen above the lowlands.

“Near December comes a sudden change. Clouds of a peculiar aspect, with a slow crawling gait, gather and grow in the azure, throwing out satiny fringes, and becoming gradually darker, until every lake-like rift and opening is closed, and the whole bent firmament is obscured in an equal structureless glow. Then comes the snow; for the clouds are ripe, the upper meadows are in bloom, and shed their varied blossoms like an orchard in the spring. Lightly, lightly they lodge in the brown grasses and in the tasseled needles of the pines, falling hour after hour, day after day, silently, lovingly—all the winds hushed—glancing

and circling hither and thither, glinting against one another, rays interlocking in flakes large as daisies; and then the dry grasses and the trees and the stones are all equally abloom again. Thunder-showers occur here during the summer months; and impressive it is to watch the coming of the big transparent drops, each a small world in itself,—one unbroken ocean hurling free through the air like poised planets through space. But still more impressive to me is the coming of the snow-flowers—falling stars, winter daisies, giving bloom to all the ground alike. Rain-drops blossom gloriously in the rainbow, and change to flowers in the sod; but snow comes in full flower direct from the dark frozen sky. From December to May storm succeeds storm, until the snow is about fifteen or twenty feet deep; but the surface is always as smooth as the breast of a bird.

“Hushed now is the life that so late was beating warmly. Most of the birds have gone down below the snow-line, the plants sleep, and all the fly-wings are folded. In June small flecks of the dead decaying sod begin to appear, gradually widening and uniting with one another, covered with creeping rags of water during the day, and icy by night, looking hopeless and unvital as crushed rocks just emerging from the darkness of the glacial period. Walk the meadow now! Scarce the memory of a flower will you find. The ground seems twice dead. Nevertheless the annual resurrection is drawing near.

"This is a perfect meadow, and under favourable circumstances exists without manifesting any marked change for many centuries. Nevertheless, soon or late, it must inevitably grow old and die." Glacier meadows occupying the space formerly occupied by the glacier lakes are gradually elevated "so far as to produce too dry a soil for the specific meadow plants, when of course they die out and give up their place to others fitted for the new conditions." Meadows circumscribed like the one depicted last the longest, "embosomed in deep woods, with the ground rising gently away from them all around; for the network of tree roots in which all the ground is clasped prevents any rapid torrential washing."

The Sierra presents yet another kind of meadows—hanging-meadows. "They are distinguishable at once from the foregoing, even by position alone; for they are always found lying aslant upon some moraine-covered hillside, trending in the direction of greatest declivity, waving up and down over rock-heaps and ledges, like rich green ribbons brilliantly illumined with flowers. They are often a mile or more in length, but never very wide, usually from thirty to fifty yards. When the hill or cañon side on which they lie dips at the required angle, and other conditions are at the same time favourable, they frequently extend from above the timber-line to the bottom of a cañon or lake-basin, descending in fine fluent lines like a broad cascade, breaking here and there into a

kind of spray on large boulders, or dividing and flowing around on either side of some projecting islet. Sometimes a noisy stream goes brawling down through their midst; and again, scarce a drop of water is in sight. They always owe their existence, however, to streams, whether visible or invisible, the wildest specimens being found where some perennial fountain, as a glacier or snow-bank or moraine-spring, sends down its waters across a rough sheet of soil in a dissipated web of feeble, oozing currentlets. These conditions give rise to a meadowy vegetation. Where the soil happens to be composed of the finer qualities of glacial detritus, and the water is not in excess, a near approach is made by the vegetation to that of the tropical lake-meadow; but where, as is more commonly the case, the soil is coarse and bouldery, the vegetation is correspondingly rank and flowery. Tall, wide-leafed grasses take their place along the sides, and rushes and nodding carices in the wetter portions, mingled with the most beautiful and imposing flowers—orange lilies and larkspurs seven or eight feet high, lupines, senecios, aliums, painted-cups, many species of mimulus, and penstemon, the ample boat-leafed *Veratrum alba*, and the magnificent Alpine columbine, with spurs an inch and a half long. At an elevation of from seven to nine thousand feet flowers frequently form the bulk of the vegetation; then the hanging-meadows become hanging-gardens. It is in hanging-meadows that the water-rat makes his curious homes,

excavating snug chambers beneath the sod, digging canals, and turning the gathered waters from channel to channel to suit his convenience, and harvesting the gay vegetation for food, cutting it off and gathering it in bunches with the heads all one way, like handfuls of culled flowers."

And now I must fulfil my promised programme, and say something about the passes of the Sierra Nevada. "The sustained grandeur of the California Alps is forcibly illustrated by the fact that there is not, throughout their whole extent, a single pass lower than 8000 feet above the level of the sea, and the average height of all that are in use is perhaps not far from 11,000 feet. A carriage-road has been constructed through what is known as the Sonora Pass, 9600 feet above the level of the sea; and substantial waggon-roads have also been built through the Carson and Johnson Passes, over which immense quantities of freight were hauled from California to the mining regions of Nevada prior to the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. One of the principal passes, the best known and most extensively travelled of all in the 'High Sierra,' is the Mono Pass. A trail was made through it about the time of the Mono gold excitement, in the year 1858, and has been in use ever since by mountaineers of every kind. Though more than a thousand feet lower than the Kearsarge Pass, it is scarcely inferior in the terrible sublimity of its rock scenery, while in snowy falling water it

far surpasses it. Being so favourably situated for the stream of Yosemite travel, the more adventurous tourists cross over through this glorious gateway to the volcanic region around Mono Lake.

"But leaving wheels and animals out of the question, the free mountaineer can make his way across the range almost everywhere and at any time of the year. To him nearly every notch between the peaks is a pass, though much patient step-cutting is at times required up and down steeply inclined glaciers, and cautious climbing over precipices.

"It is interesting to observe how surely the Alpcrossing animals of every kind fall into the same trails. The more rugged and inaccessible the general character of the topography of any particular region, the more surely will the trails of white men, Indians, bears, deer, wild sheep, etc., be found converging into the best passes. The Indians of the western slope venture cautiously over the passes in settled weather to attend dances, and obtain loads of pine-nuts and the larvæ of a small fly that breeds in Mono and Owen Lakes, which when dried forms an important article of food; while the Pale Utes cross over from the east to hunt the deer and obtain supplies of acorns; and it is truly astonishing to see what immense loads the haggard old squaws make out to carry barefooted through those rough passes, oftentimes for a distance of sixty or seventy miles. They are always accompanied by the men, who stride on

unburdened and erect in advance, stooping occasionally to pile stepping-stones for them against steep rocks, just as they would prepare the way in difficult places for their ponies."

["How horrid!" said Frank; "poor old women!"

"It isn't quite my idea of the *noble savage*," said Hal laughing; "'tis only noble to be good.'"]

"Bears evince great sagacity as mountaineers, but although fond of travelling, they seldom cross the range. Even the wild sheep, the best mountaineers of all, choose regular passes in making journeys across the summit. Deer seldom pass from one side of the range to the other.

"The glaciers are the pass-makers, and it is by them that the courses of all the mountaineers are predestined. The scenery of all the passes is of the very wildest and grandest description—lofty peaks massed together and laden around their bases with ice and snow; chains of glacier lakes; cascading streams in endless variety; with glorious views, westward over a sea of rocks and woods, and eastward over the strange ashy plains and volcanoes and mountain ranges of Mono and Inyo.

"The main portion of the Mono Pass is formed by Bloody Cañon, which begins at the very summit of the range. The first grand rush of white men that forced a way through its sombre depths were eager gold-seekers, during the exciting discoveries made in the year 1858; but the cañon was known and

travelled as a pass by the Indians and mountain animals long before its discovery by white men. Its name may perhaps have been suggested by the predominant colour of the metamorphic slates in which it is in great part eroded, or more probably by blood stains made by the unfortunate animals which were compelled to slip and shuffle awkwardly over its rough, cutting rocks. I have never known an animal, either mule or horse, to make its way through the cañon, either in going up or down, without losing more or less blood from wounds on the legs. Occasionally one is killed outright, falling headlong and rolling over precipices like a boulder; but such instances are far rarer than, from the terrible appearance of the trail, one would be led to expect. The more experienced when driven loose find their way over the most dangerous places with a caution and a sagacity that are truly wonderful. During the gold excitement, it was at times a matter of considerable pecuniary importance to force a way through the cañon with pack-trains early in the spring, while it was yet heavily blocked toward the head with snow, and then the mules with their loads had sometimes to be let down over the steepest drifts by means of ropes.

"A good bridle-path leads from Yosemite through many a grove and meadow up to the head of the cañon, a distance of about thirty miles. Here the scenery undergoes a sudden and startling condensa-

tion. Mountains, red, gray, and black, rise close at hand on the right, whitened around their bases with banks of enduring snow; on the left swells the huge red mass of Mount Gibbs; while in front the eye wanders down the shadowy cañon, and out on the warm plain of Mono, where the lake is seen gleaming like a burnished metallic disk, and around clusters of lofty volcanic cones, with blue mountain ranges in the distance. A chain of shining lakelets hangs down from the very summit of the pass, linked together by a silvery stream. The highest are set in bleak rough bowls scantily fringed with yellow sedges. Winter storms blow snow through the pass in blinding drifts, and avalanches shoot from the heights, rushing and booming like waterfalls. Then are these sparkling tarns filled and buried, leaving not a hint of their existence. In June and July they begin to blink and thaw out like sleepy eyes; the carices thrust up their short brown spikes, the daisies bloom in turn, and the most profoundly buried of them all is at length warmed and summered, as if winter were only a dream. Red Lake is the lowest of the chain, and also the largest." Thence the stream issues, "and one of its most beautiful developments is Diamond Cascade, a short distance below. Viewed in front, this charming fall resembles a strip of embroidery, varying through the seasons with the temperature and the volume of water. Cañon Creek roves like an Arab through a delightful wilderness of pines and

blooming underbrush. A glorious milky way of cascades is developed, whose individual beauties might well call forth volumes of description. Bower Cascade is perhaps the most surpassingly beautiful of them all. It is situated in the lower region of the pass, just where the sunshine begins to mellow between the cold and warm climates. Here the glad creek, grown strong with tribute gathered from many a snowy fountain, sings richer strains, and becomes more human and lovable at every step. Now you may find the rose and yarrow by its side, and small meadows filled with grasses and clover. At the head of a low-browed rock luxuriant dogwood bushes and willows arch over from bank to bank, embowering the stream with their leafy branches, and waving plumes kept in motion by the current fringe the brow of the cascade in front. From this leafy covert the stream leaps vigorously out into the light in a fluted curve thickly sown with sparkling crystals, and falls into a pool filled with brown boulders, out of which it creeps gay with foam-bells, and disappears in a tangle of verdure like that from which it came.

"Hence to the foot of the cañon the metamorphic slates give place to granite, whose nobler sculpture calls forth expressions of corresponding beauty from the stream in passing over it—bright trills of rapids, booming notes of falls, solemn hushes of smooth, gliding sheets, all chanting and blending in glorious harmony. When at length its impetuous Alpine life

is done, it slips through a meadow with scarce an audible whisper, and falls asleep in Moraine Lake.

"Bloody Cañon, like every other cañon in the California Alps, was recently occupied by a glacier, which derived its fountain snows from the adjacent summits, and descended into Mono Lake at a time when its waters stood at a much higher level than now. My first visit to this cañon was made in the summer of 1869, under circumstances well calculated to heighten the impressions that are the peculiar off-spring of mountains. I came from the blooming tangles of Florida, and waded out into the plant-gold of the great central plain of California when its flora was as yet untrodden. Golden compositæ covered all the ground from the Coast range to the Sierra like a stratum of curdled sunshine, in which I revelled for weeks; then gave myself up to be borne forward on the crest of the summer wave that sweeps annually up the Sierra flank, and spends itself on the snowy Alps. At the big Tuolumne Meadows I remained more than a month. The mountaineer with whom I was camping is one of those remarkable men one so frequently meets in California, the hard angles and bosses of whose characters have been brought into striking relief by the grinding excitements of the gold period, until they come to resemble glacial landscapes. But at this late day my friend's activities had subsided, and his craving for rest caused him to become a gentle shepherd, and literally to lie down

with the lamb. He advised me to explore Bloody Cañon. 'I have never seen it myself,' he said, 'for I was never so unfortunate as to pass that way; but I have heard many a strange story about it, and I warrant you will at least find it wild enough.' Next day I made up a bundle of bread, tied my note-book to my belt, and strode away in the bracing air, full of eager, indefinite hope. The plushy lawns that lay in my path served to soothe my morning haste. The sod in many places was starred with daisies and blue gentians, over which I lingered. I traced the paths of the ancient glaciers over many a shining pavement, and marked the gaps in the upper forests that told the power of the winter avalanches. Climbing higher, I saw for the first time the gradual dwarfing of the pines in compliance with climate; and on the summit discovered creeping mats of the Arctic willow overgrown with silky catkins, and patches of the dark vaccinium, with its round flowers sprinkled in the grass like purple hail; while in every direction the landscape stretched sublimely away in fresh wildness, a manuscript written by the hand of nature alone. At length, as I entered the pass, the huge rocks began to close around in all their wild impressiveness, when suddenly a drove of gray hairy beings came in sight, lumbering towards me with a kind of boneless, wallowing motion like bears."

["Good," cried Tom; "now for an adventure!"]

"I never turn back—"

["Right you are ;—I beg pardon, Mr. Jerningham, I mean I'm glad you don't," interrupted impulsive Tom.]

"I never turn back, though often so inclined, and in this particular instance, amid such surroundings, everything seemed singularly unfavourable for the calm acceptance of so grim a company. Suppressing my fears, I soon discovered that, although crooked as summit pines, the strange creatures were sufficiently erect to belong to our own species. They proved to be nothing more formidable than Mono Indians, dressed in the skins of sage-rabbits nicely sewed together into square robes."

[Tom looked a little disappointed.]

"Both the men and the women begged persistently for whisky and tobacco, and seemed so accustomed to denials that I found it impossible to convince them that I had none to give. Excepting the names of these two products of civilization (?), they seemed to understand not a word of English ; but I afterwards learned that they were on their way to Yosemite Valley, to feast awhile on fish, and procure a load of acorns to carry back through the pass to their huts on the shore of Mono Lake. Occasionally a good countenance may be seen among the Mono Indians ; but these, my first specimens, were mostly old and ugly, and some of them altogether hideous. The dirt on their faces was fairly stratified, and seemed so ancient in some places, and so undisturbed, as almost to possess a geological significance."

["Oh, Mr. Jerningham!" proceeded from the feminine lips amongst the audience, in tones of decided disgust.

The lads could not help laughing.]

"The older faces were, moreover, strangely blurred and divided into sections by furrows that looked like cleavage joints, suggesting exposure in a castaway condition on the mountains for ages. Viewed at a little distance, they appeared as mere dirt specks in the landscape; and I was glad to see them fading down the pass out of sight.

"Then came evening, and the sombre cliffs were inspired with the ineffable beauty of the alpenglow. A solemn calm fell upon every feature of the landscape. All the lower portion of the cañon was in gloaming shadow, and I crept into a hollow near one of the upper lakelets to smooth away the burs from a sheltered spot for a bed. When the short twilight faded, I kindled a sunny fire, made a cup of tea, and lay down with my face to the deep clear sky. Soon the night-wind began to flow and pour in torrents among the jagged peaks, mingling its strange tones with those of the waterfalls sounding far below; and as I drifted toward sleep, I began to experience an uncomfortable feeling of nearness to the furred Monos. Then the full-moon looked down over the edge of the cañon wall, her countenance seemingly filled with intense concern, and apparently so near as to produce a startling effect, as if she had entered one's bedroom. The whole night was full of strange sounds,

and I gladly welcomed the morning. Breakfast was soon done, and I set forth in the exhilarating freshness of the new day, rejoicing in the abundance of pure wildness so close about me. The stupendous rock-walls stood forward in the thin light, hacked and scarred with centuries of storms; while down in the bottom of the cañon grooved and polished bosses heaved and glistened like swelling sea-waves, telling a grand old story of the ancient glacier that once poured its crushing floods above them.

"Fresh beauty appeared at every step—delicate rock-ferns and groups of the fairest flowers. Now a lake came in view, now a waterfall. Never fell light in brighter spangles, never fell water in whiter foam. I floated through the cañon enchanted, and was out on the Mono levels before I was aware. Looking back from the shore of Moraine Lake, my morning ramble seemed all a dream. There curved Bloody Cañon, a mere glacial furrow two thousand feet deep, with moutoned rocks proceeding from the sides and braided together in the middle, like rounded swelling muscles. Here the lilies were higher than my head, and the sunshine was warm enough for palms. Yet the snow around the Arctic willows was plainly visible only four miles away, and between were narrow specimen zones of all the principal climates of the globe. On the bank of a small brook that comes gurgling down the side of the left lateral moraine, I found a camp-fire still burning, which no

doubt belonged to the gray Indians I had met on the summit ; and I listened instinctively, and moved cautiously forward, half expecting to see some of their grim faces peering out of the bushes. But these silly fears were speedily forgotten.

"Passing on toward the open plain, I noticed three well-defined terminal moraines curving gracefully across the cañon stream, and joining themselves by long splices to the two noble laterals. These mark the halting-places of the vanished glacier, when it was retreating into its summit shadows on the breaking up of the glacial winter. The cañon should be seen in winter ; the views of the mountains in their winter garb, and the ride at lightning speed down the pass between the snowy walls, would be truly glorious."

If I haven't wearied you with my unbounded admiration of the Sierra Nevada, I should like before I stop to give you some little idea of the mountain lakes.

"The whole number can hardly be less than fifteen hundred," so I shall not attempt to describe them all ; "counting the smaller pools and tarns, they would be innumerable. A beautiful system of grouping is very soon perceived, in twos and threes or more, in correspondence with the glacial fountains, also their extension in the trends of the ancient glaciers ; and, in general, their dependence, as to form, size, and position, upon the character of the rock in which their

basins have been eroded, and the quantity and direction of application of the glacial force expended upon each basin. In the upper cañons we find them usually in pretty regular succession strung together like beads on the bright ribbons of their feeding streams, which pour white from one to the other—their perfect mirror stillness making impressive contrasts with the grand blare and glare of the connecting cataracts. In Lake Hollow, on the north side of the Hoffmann Spur, immediately above the great Tuolumne Cañon, there are ten lovely lakelets lying near together in one general hollow, like eggs in a nest. Seen from above in one general view, feathered with Williamson spruce and fringed with sedge, they seem to me the most singularly beautiful and interestingly located lake-cluster I have ever yet discovered. Lake Tahoe, twenty-two miles long by about ten wide, and from five hundred to over one thousand six hundred feet in depth, is the largest of all the Sierra lakes." The glacier scoops a basin; the streams flow into it: that is how the mountain lakes are formed. It is also possible for a lake to die, or to become extinguished by masses of detritus brought down from distant mountains by the streams, which eventually choke it; or an avalanche may swoop down upon it; or it may be obliterated by landslips, earthquakes, etc. "Of course, fishes cannot get into them, and this is generally true of every glacier lake in the range; but they are all well stocked with happy


frogs, whose progenitors must have made some exciting excursions through the woods and up the sides of the cañons. As far as I have been able to find out, the upper lakes are snow-buried in winter to a depth of about thirty-five or forty feet, and those most exposed to avalanches to a depth of even a hundred feet or more. These last are, of course, nearly lost to the landscape. Some remain buried for several years at a time when the snow-fall is exceptionally great, and many open only on one side late in the season."

There, ladies and gentlemen, however I may have failed to interest you, I think you cannot accuse me of wandering materially from my subjects, or of bringing forward matter unfit for the F. and M. C. If I have in the least degree enlightened or amused any of you, I am delighted with myself, and still more with you.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Jerningham was now proposed by Hal in a very neat style, seconded by Frank with much propriety, and carried with universal acclamation. It was really surprising what a large noise so small a company could make. Mr. Jerningham having in turn, as is the custom, thanked them for thanking him, the whole party adjourned to the dining-room for supper.

CHAPTER VII

HAL'S ADJOURNED PAPER.

N a very few days Oliver Jerningham, who had established himself at The Pines as an honoured and delightful guest, departed.

He left behind him quite a lamenting household and a unanimous circle of admirers. Uncle Fred accompanied him to Liverpool, but returned in time for the weekly meeting of the F. and M. C., to hear the remainder of Hal's paper.

At breakfast, just before he left, Oliver Jerningham said to Mr. Meadows,—

"Next year, instead of sending these boys to the European Continent, pack them on board a steamer and send them under Fred's escort to New York, and I'll engage to show them the California Alps. If one should be hugged by a bear, or pounced upon by a wolf, or frightened by a Douglass, I suppose you wouldn't take it very much to heart."

"But indeed we *should*, sir," exclaimed Fanny Norton emphatically. "Do you suppose we don't love our brothers and cousins?"

Mr. Jerningham lifted his eyebrows amazedly, and gave her a comical glance. "Brothers and cousins are a good deal bigger than a Douglass, Miss Fanny."

"I was thinking of the bears and the wolves," she answered.

"When you want to get rid of them, at any rate, you'll know where to send them, Mr. Meadows."

"Thank you, Oliver," said that gentleman; "it's quite an advantage to have them provided for."

"And there's nothing we should like better," said Hal.

"They'll be coming out to me as stow-aways, I fear, if you don't lock them up. What a pity I suggested it!" and Oliver Jerningham pretended to look frightened.

"You'll have no one but yourself to thank, either," said Uncle Fred, laughing.

Mr. Jerningham's visit, which had interrupted Hal's narrative, had, however, even stimulated the desires of the F. and M. C. to behold mountains and forests for themselves, and increased their interest in every piece of information concerning either; so, although it is always awkward to have to break into two parts what was intended as a complete whole, the lecturer had at least the satisfaction to find that the whole audience were attent to hear what further he had to tell.

I was come, I find, he began, to a description of

the wonderful nepenthes, or pitcher-plants, of the Borneo mountains. The ascent of the greatest mountain of Borneo, Kina Balu, was the object of Mr. Spenser St. John's expedition. When on the way, his eyes feasted on this curious and beautiful plant. "One evening a man who had been visiting another village of this tribe produced from his basket specimens of two new kinds of nepenthes, or pitcher-plants, which were wondrous to behold; so we determined to make a visit to the spot where he found them. As the man assured us it would be a very long walk, we provided ourselves with blankets, to enable us to sleep out a night if necessary. We passed over a hill at the back of the village, which, where the path crosses it, is about five hundred feet above the houses, and is a continuation of a spur of Kina Balu. We then descended into a ravine, and crossing over a subspur, had a fine view of a valley about three miles broad. Crossing the Hobang stream after breakfast, a steep climb led us to the western spur, along which our path lay. Here, at about four thousand feet, Mr. Low found a beautiful white and spotted pitcher-plant, which he considered the prettiest of the twenty-two species of nepenthes with which he was then acquainted. The pitchers are white, and covered in the most beautiful manner with spots of an irregular form, of a rosy pink colour. On each leaf is a row of very soft downy hairs running along its edge, and a similar brown

pubescence grows on the cups. It is a climbing-plant, and varies from fifteen to twenty feet in length. Its leaves are about nine inches long in the blade, and have winged petioles, which are carried down the stem to the next leaf below, each of which bears a pitcher on a prolonged petiole about fifteen inches in length. We continued our walk along the ridge until we had reached an elevation of four thousand five hundred feet, when the path descended to the pleasant stream, or rather torrent, of Kina Taki, in which greenstone was the principal rock. Another steep climb of eight hundred feet brought us to the Marei Parei spur, to the spot where the ground was covered with the magnificent pitcher-plants of which we had come in search. This one has been called the *nepenthes rajah*, and is a plant about four feet in length, with broad leaves stretching on every side, having the green pitchers resting on the ground in a circle about it. Its shape and size are remarkable. I will give the measurement of a small one, to indicate the form. The length along the back was nearly fourteen inches; from the base to the top of the column in front was five inches; and its lid was a foot long by four inches broad, and of an oval shape. Its mouth was surrounded by a plaited pile, which, near the column, was two inches broad, lessening in its narrowest part to three-quarters of an inch. The plaited pile of the mouth was also undulating in broad waves. Near the stem the pitcher is four

inches deep, so that the mouth is situated upon it in a triangular manner. The colour of an old pitcher was a deep purple, but was generally mauve outside—very dark indeed in the lower part, though lighter towards the rim. The inside is of the same colour, but has a kind of glazed and shiny appearance. The lid is mauve in the centre, shading to green at the edges. It is indeed one of the most astonishing productions of nature.

“The pitchers, as I have before observed, rest on the ground in a circle, and the young plants have cups of the same form as those of the old ones. One morning, while the men were cooking their rice, as we sat before the tent enjoying our chocolate, observing one of our followers carrying water in a splendid specimen of the *nepenthes rajah*, we desired him to bring it to us, and found that it held exactly four pint bottles. It was nineteen inches in circumference. We afterwards saw others apparently much larger; and Mr. Low, while wandering in search of flowers, came upon one in which was a drowned rat.”

After collecting a great many specimens of *nepenthes* and some other flowers, the travellers descended to the mountain village of Kian, whence they had started on their search. The villagers, with whom they had already become friendly, gave them a kindly welcome. The care the Europeans bestowed every morning upon their persons excited great astonish-

ment. The toilet had to be made in public, and "they could observe that we bathed, cleaned our teeth, brushed and combed our hair, and went through our other ordinary occupations. To-day they had grown more bold, and were sedulously making fun of the scrupulous care we were bestowing on our persons while the cook was preparing our breakfast. We thought that we would good-humouredly turn the laugh against them; so we selected one who had the dirtiest face among them—and it was difficult to select where all were dirty—and asked her to glance at herself in the looking-glass. She did so, and then passed it round to the others. We then asked them which they thought looked best—cleanliness or dirt. This was received with a universal giggle. We had brought with us several dozen cheap looking-glasses, so we told Iseiom, the daughter of Li Nioung, our host, that if she would go and wash her face, we would give her one. She treated the offer with scorn, tossed her head, and went into her father's room. But about half-an-hour afterwards we saw her come into the house and try to mix quietly with the crowd; but it was of no use. Her companions soon noticed she had a clean face, and pushed her into the front to be inspected. She blushing received her looking-glass, and ran away amid the laughter of the crowd of girls. The example had a great effect, however, and before evening nine more had received a looking-glass.

"On our way to the summit of Kina Balu we took the same path I followed on the previous occasion. It was steep, and but rarely traversed, except by the rat-snarers. The further we advanced the more numerous were the traps; but during our ascent no rats were caught. In fact, these wary animals are seldom taken, except when trying to escape from the active village curs. We heard the shouts of the hunters below, and the bark of the dogs, but we had passed on before they reached the path. The mountain rat seems a favourite article of food among the Kians, though they do not eat those which frequent the houses. The edible animal is about the size of the gray Norway rat, and is of the bandicoot species."

The forests of the Amazon yield a rich harvest of vegetable treasures. Amongst these is the india-rubber tree. Going along the noble river in a steamer, "not a bit of ground is seen. Straight up from the water the forest rises like a wall—dense, dark, impenetrable, a hundred feet of leafy splendour. And breaking out everywhere from among the heaped-up masses are the palm-trees; for here the palms hold court. Nowhere else on the broad earth is their glory unveiled as we see it. If palms standing alone are esteemed the most beautiful of trees, what shall we say when their numbers are counted, not by scores, nor hundreds, but by thousands, and all in a ground-work of such forest as is never seen outside of the tropics? The Indian pilot

points out numbers of rubber trees, and we learn to recognize their white trunks and shining bright-green foliage. This low-tide region is one of the important rubber districts, where hundreds of seringueiros are employed in gathering and preparing the crude gum. Occasionally we see their thatched huts along the shore, built on piles, and always damp, reeking, dismal, suggestive of ague and rheumatism; for the tide lowlands, glorious as they are from the river, are sodden marshes within, where many a rubber-gatherer has found disease and death. The little town of Breves owes its prosperity to this dangerous industry. It is built on a low strip of sandy land, but with swamps on either side coming close up to the town.

"An Indian canoe-man is engaged. He sets us across the river at a half-ruined hut, where bright vines clamber over the broken thatch and hang in long festoons in front of the low doorway; but within, the floor is sodden black clay, and dark mould hangs on the sides, and the air is like a sepulchre. The single slovenly woman who inhabits the place complains bitterly of the ague which tortures her; yet year after year, until the house falls to pieces, she will go on dying here, because, forsooth, it is her own, and the rubber trees are near. Back of the house they are in a scattered marshy forest, where we clamber over logs, and sink into pools of mud, and leap the puddles; where the mosquitoes

are blood-thirsty, and nature is damp, and dark, and threatening; where the silence is unbroken by beast or bird—a silence that can be felt. It is like a tomb in which we are buried—away from the sunshine, away from brute and man, alone with rotting death. The very beauty of our forest tomb makes us shudder by its intenseness. In the early morning men and women come with baskets of clay cups on their backs, and little hatchets to gash the trees. Where the white milk drips down from the gash, they stick their cups on the trunk with daubs of clay, moulded so as to catch the whole flow. If the tree is a large one, four or five gashes may be cut in a circle around the trunk. On the next day other gashes are made a little below these; and so on until the rows reach the ground. By eleven o'clock the flow of milk has ceased, and the seringueiros come to collect the contents of the cups in calabash jugs. A gill or so is the utmost yield from each tree, and a single gatherer may attend to a hundred and twenty trees or more, wading always through these dark marshes, and paying dearly for his profit in fever and weakness.

“ Our hostess has brought in her day's gathering—a calabash full of the white liquid, in appearance precisely like milk. If left in this condition it coagulates after a while, and forms an inferior whitish gum. To make the black rubber of commerce, the milk must go through a peculiar process of manufacture, for which our guide has been preparing.

Over a smouldering fire, fed with the hard nuts of the tucuma palm, he places a kind of clay chimney, like a wide-mouthed, bottomless jug. Through this *boias* the thick smoke pours in a constant stream. Now he takes his mould—in this case a wooden one, like a round-bladed paddle—washes it with the milk, and holds it over the smoke until the liquid coagulates. Then another coat is added; only now, as the wood is heated, the milk coagulates faster. It may take the gatherings of two or three days to cover the mould thickly enough. Then the rubber is still dull white; but in a short time it turns brown, and finally almost black, as it is sent to the market. The mass is cut from the paddle and sold to traders in the village. Bottles are sometimes made by moulding the rubber over a clay ball, which is then broken up and removed. Our old-fashioned rubber shoes used to be made in this way. Twenty million pounds of rubber are annually exported from Para. In the dry season many thousand people are engaged in gathering it. Unfortunately the rubber-gatherers are sadly improvident. One can make enough in a day to keep him a week; and when his money is spent, he can draw again on his ever-ready bank. The small traders dupe the foresters, and give them articles of trumpery value for the precious rubber; and the whole industry at present calls for the attention of the Brazilian government, to make it as valuable as it ought to be to the country."

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In the favourite residence of the monarch of these mountains "teeming with gold," none of which was converted into coin, but all given to the sovereign for his exclusive benefit, the water of the baths was conducted "through subterranean silver channels into basins of gold." In the spacious gardens, besides plants and flowers, there "were parterres of a more extraordinary kind planted by their side, glowing with the various forms of vegetable life skilfully imitated in gold and silver! Among them the Indian corn, the most beautiful of American grains, is par-

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the wonderful nepenthes, or pitcher-plants, of the Borneo mountains. The ascent of the greatest mountain of Borneo, Kina Balu, was the object of Mr. Spenser St. John's expedition. When on the way, his eyes feasted on this curious and beautiful plant. "One evening a man who had been visiting another village of this tribe produced from his basket specimens of two new kinds of nepenthes, or pitcher-plants, which were wondrous to behold; so we determined to make a visit to the spot where he found them. As the man assured us it would be a very long walk, we provided ourselves with blankets, to enable us to sleep out a night if necessary. We passed over a hill at the back of the village, which, where the path crosses it, is about five hundred feet above the houses, and is a continuation of a spur of Kina Balu. We then descended into a ravine, and crossing over a subspur, had a fine view of a valley about three miles broad. Crossing the Hobang stream after breakfast, a steep climb led us to the western spur, along which our path lay. Here, at about four thousand feet, Mr. Low found a beautiful white and spotted pitcher-plant, which he considered the prettiest of the twenty-two species of nepenthes with which he was then acquainted. The pitchers are white, and covered in the most beautiful manner with spots of an irregular form, of a rosy pink colour. On each leaf is a row of very soft downy hairs running along its edge, and a similar brown

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moon, adjoining, had its appointments of silver, "as suited to the pale silvery light of the beautiful planet." "All the plate, ornaments, and utensils of the sanctuary were of gold or silver." The mining of the ancient Peruvians was somewhat primitive: they "simply excavated a cavern in the steep side of the mountain, or at most opened a horizontal vein of moderate depth. Their method of smelting the ore was by means of furnaces built in elevated and exposed situations, where they might be fanned by the strong breezes of the mountains. They did little more than penetrate below the crust, the outer rind, as it were, formed over those golden caverns which lie hidden in the dark depths of the Andes. Yet what they gleaned from the surface was more than adequate for all their demands. For they were not a commercial people, and had no knowledge of money."

Gold is found in the island of Borneo. "In November 1848 a great landslip took place, and the face of the Trian mountain was laid bare. Some Malays, observing small pieces of gold mixed with the clay, began a strict search, and having great success, the news soon spread, and several thousand people flocked to the spot, where they worked till the heap of earth and stones was cleared away. All had fair success, and we heard of none who got less than an ounce and a half per month. The work lasted above six weeks. I saw one nugget picked up which

points out numbers of rubber trees, and we learn to recognize their white trunks and shining bright-green foliage. This low-tide region is one of the important rubber districts, where hundreds of seringueiros are employed in gathering and preparing the crude gum. Occasionally we see their thatched huts along the shore, built on piles, and always damp, reeking, dismal, suggestive of ague and rheumatism; for the tide lowlands, glorious as they are from the river, are sodden marshes within, where many a rubber-gatherer has found disease and death. The little town of Breves owes its prosperity to this dangerous industry. It is built on a low strip of sandy land, but with swamps on either side coming close up to the town.

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human locusts, over the Alps into Gaul. The great Napoleon's Alpine marches, too, would have made fine subjects; and of later date that masterly stolen advance of the German soldiers through the shadows of the Black Forest by night, under their brave Prince Fritz, in the Franco-German War. The history of the world, in its most exciting passages, lays the scene continually in forests and mountains."

"We had no idea of aspiring to such heights, uncle," said Frank; "and please to remember we only propose to call the annals of our club 'Stories of the Forest and Mountain,' and had no thought of doing more than stringing together a few interesting facts of adventure and sport."

"You are right, Frank," said his uncle; "and I am delighted that you have succeeded so well. But the subject you had chosen was wider than you dreamed of; and you have done wisely to keep within limits, or your book might have grown to a Brobdingnagian size."

CHAPTER VIII.

WITH AXE AND ALPENSTOCK.



THE Matterhorn, one of the most glorious peaks of the Swiss Alps, began Uncle Fred, it was my ambition to ascend. It is an abrupt, sharp pinnacle piercing into the heavens; often and often "it drew my eyes towards it with irresistible fascination as it shimmered in the blue, too preoccupied with heaven to think even with contempt on the designs of a son of earth to reach its inviolable crest." In the company of a distinguished friend, far more experienced in Alpine climbing, particularly at that time, than I was myself, I made the first attempt many years ago, with what success you shall hear. The season was unfavourable, being stormy and extremely wet; but we resolved to try, and engaged Johann Joseph Bennen, one of the finest German-Swiss guides who ever breathed, to do his best for us. I shall have much to tell you about him, so I hope you will not fail to make his acquaintance, and admire with me his noble courage, his self-devotion, his pleasant smile and cheerful demeanour.

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In the favourite residence of the monarch of these mountains "teeming with gold," none of which was converted into coin, but all given to the sovereign for his exclusive benefit, the water of the baths was conducted "through subterranean silver channels into basins of gold." In the spacious gardens, besides plants and flowers, there "were parterres of a more extraordinary kind planted by their side, glowing with the various forms of vegetable life skilfully imitated in gold and silver! Among them the Indian corn, the most beautiful of American grains, is par-

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are signs that it will not be lasting. By five we are crossing the first snow-beds, and the leader of the day comes to the front: all day he will be cutting steps. We ascend a narrow edge of snow, a cliff some way to the right. The snow is frozen and hard as rock, and arms and legs are worked vigorously. My companion calls to me to know whether I recollect the 'conditions'—that is, if your feet slip from the steps, turn in a moment on your face, and dig in hard with alpenstock in both hands under your body; by this means you will stop yourself if it is possible. Once on your back, it is all over, unless others can save you; you have lost all chance of helping yourself. In a few moments we stop and rope all together, in which state we continued the whole day. Soon the slope lessens for a while, but in front a wall of snow stretches steeply upwards to a gap, which we have to reach in a kind of recess, flanked by crags of formidable appearance. We turn to the rocks on the left hand. In ascending a mountain one is always tempted to diverge from snow to rocks, or *vice versa*. Bennen had intended to mount straight up towards the gap, and it is best not to interfere with him; he yields, however, to our suggestions, and we assail the rocks. These, however, are ice-bound, steep, and slippery; hands and knees are at work, and progress is slow. After an examination to see whether there is any better way, Bennen leads to the right, and moves swiftly up

from ledge to ledge. Time is getting on; but at length we emerge over the rocks just in face of the gap, and separated from it by a sort of large snow-crater, overhung on the left by the end of the ridge, from which stones fall which have scarred the sides of the crater. These are steep, but we curve quickly and silently round them; no stones fall upon us; and now we have reached the narrow neck of snow which forms the actual gap. It is half-past eight, and the first part of our work is done. By no means the hardest part, however.

“ We stand upon a broad red granite slab, the lowest step of the actual peak of the Matterhorn; no one has stood there before us. The slab forms one end of the edge of snow, surmounted at the other end by some fifty feet of overhanging rock, the end of the ridge. On one side of us is the snow-crater round which we had been winding; on the other side a scarped and seamed face of snow drops sheer on the north to what we know is the Zmutt Glacier. Above us rise the towers and pinnacles of the Matterhorn, certainly a tremendous array. Actual contact immensely increases one's impressions of this, the hardest and strongest of all the mountain masses of the Alps. Its form is more remarkable than that of other mountains, not by chance, but because it is built of more massive and durable materials, and more solidly put together. Nowhere have I seen such astonishing masonry. The broad gneiss blocks are generally smooth and com-

pact, with little appearance of splintering or weathering. Tons of rock, in the shape of boulders, must fall almost daily down its sides; but the amount of these, even in the course of centuries, is as nothing compared with the mass of the mountain: the ordinary processes of disintegration can have little or no effect upon it.

"Two lines of ascent offer, between which we have to choose; one along the middle or dividing ridge, the backbone of the mountain, at the end of which we stand: this we choose. As we step from our halting-place, Bennen turns round and addresses us in a few words of exhortation, like the generals in Thucydides. He knows us well enough to be sure that we shall not feel afraid, but every footstep must be planted with the utmost precaution. No fear, but '*wohl immer Achtung*' (care is always right). Soon our difficulties begin. We are immersed in a wilderness of blocks, roofed and festooned with huge plates and stalactites of ice, so large that one is half disposed to seize hold and clamber up them. Round, over, and under them we go. Often progress seems impossible, but Bennen, ever in advance, and perched like a bird on some projecting crag, contrives to find a way. Now we crawl singly along a narrow ledge of rock, with a wall on one side and nothing on the other; there is no hold for hands or alpenstock, and the ledge slopes a little, so that if the nails in our boots hold not, down we shall go. In the middle of it a piece of

rock juts out, which we ingeniously duck under, and emerge just beneath a shower of water which there is no room to escape from. Presently comes a more extraordinary place—a perfect chimney of rock, cased all over with hard black ice about an inch thick. The bottom leads out into space, and the top is somewhere in the upper regions; there is absolutely nothing to grasp at, and to this day I cannot understand how a human being could get up or down it unassisted. Bennen, however, rolls up it somehow like a cat; he is at the top, and beckons my companion to advance. My turn comes next. I endeavour to mount by squeezing myself against the sides; but near the top friction suddenly gives way, and down comes my weight upon the rope: a stout haul from above, and now one knee is upon the edge, and I am safe. Carrel, our porter, is pulled up after me. After a time we get off the rocks, and mount a slope of ice which curves rapidly over for about three yards to our left. We reach the top of this, and proceed along it, till at last a sort of pinnacle is reached, from which we can survey the line of towers and crags before us up to a point just below the actual top, and we halt to rest a while. Bennen goes on to see whether it is possible to cross over to the other ridge, which seems an easier one. Left to himself, he treads lightly, and almost carelessly along. ‘Geb’ acht, Bennen!’ (Take care of yourself!) we shout after him, but needlessly. He stops and moves al-

ternately, peering wistfully about, exactly like a chamois; but soon he returns and says there is no passage, and we must keep to the ridge we are on."

It now appeared that the "ascent would be an exceedingly long and hard piece of work, which the unparalleled amount of ice made longer and harder than usual." After consultation we again moved on. At length we came to the base of a mighty knob, huger and uglier than its fellows, to which a little *arête* of snow served as a sort of drawbridge. Leaving my companion, who preferred not to proceed any further, "Bennen and I had at first a hard scramble up some very steep rocks, our motions giving to those below us the impression that we were urging up bales of goods, instead of the simple weight of our own bodies. Turning the corner of the ridge, we had to cross an unpleasant slope of smooth rock covered by about eighteen inches of snow. In ascending, this place was passed in silence; but in coming down, the fear arose that the superficial layer might slip away with us. Bennen warned me, emphatically declaring his own powerlessness to render any help should the footing give way. Having crossed this slope in our ascent, we were fronted by a cliff, against which we rose mainly by aid of the felspar crystals protuberant from its face. Midway up the cliff Bennen asked me to hold on, as he did not feel sure that it was the best route. I accordingly ceased moving, and lay against the rock with legs and arms outstretched.

Bennen climbed to the top of the cliff, but returned immediately with a flush of confidence in his eye. 'I will lead you to the top,' he said, excitedly. Had I been free I should have cried, 'Bravo!' but in my position I did not care to risk the muscular action which a hearty 'bravo' would demand. Aided by the rope, I was at his side in a minute, and we soon learned that his confidence was premature. Difficulties thickened around us: on no other mountain are they so thick; and each of them is attended by possibilities of the most blood-chilling kind. Our mode of action was this: Bennen advanced while I held on to a rock, prepared for the jerk if he should slip. When he had secured himself, he called out, 'Ich bin fest; kommen Sie' (I am secure; come). I then worked forward, sometimes halting where he had halted, sometimes passing him till a firm anchorage was gained, when it again became his turn to advance. Thus each of us waited until the other could seize upon something capable of bearing the shock of a falling man. At some places Bennen deemed a little extra assurance necessary; and here he emphasized his statement that he was 'fest,' by a suitable hyperbole, 'Ich bin fest wie eine Mauer,—fest wie ein Berg; Ich halte Sie gewiss' (I am safe as a wall,—safe as a hill; I can hold you certainly), or some such expression.

"Looking from Breuil, a series of moderate sized prominences are seen along the *arête* of the Matter-

horn; but when you are nearer them these black eminences rise like tremendous castles in the air, so wild and high as almost to quell all hope of scaling or getting round them. At the base of one of these edifices Bennen paused and looked closely at the grand mass; he wiped his forehead, and turning to me—‘Was denken Sie, Herr?’ (What do you think, sir?) ‘Shall we go on, or shall we return?’ ‘I am without a wish, Bennen,’ I replied; ‘where you go I follow, be it up or down.’ He disliked the idea of giving in, and would willingly have thrown the onus of stopping upon me. We attacked the castle, and by a hard effort reached one of its mid ledges, whence we had plenty of room to examine the remainder. We might certainly have continued the ascent beyond this place, but Bennen paused here. To a minute of talk succeeded a minute of silence, during which my guide earnestly scanned the heights. He then turned towards me, and the words seemed to fall from his lips through a resisting medium as he said, ‘I think the time is too short!’” While we were above, my friend below was scared by an “ominous visitant: down came a fragment of rock the size of a man’s body, and dashed past him, sending the snow flying. For a moment he thought we might have dislodged it, but looking again he saw it had passed over our heads and come from the crags above. Indeed, neither of us observed the monster, though a stone, which was possibly a splinter from

it, hit me in the neck. Coming down, sometimes only one could advance at a time. At length we reach a place whence no egress is possible; we look in vain for traces of the way we had come; it is our friend the ice-coated chimney. Bennen gets down first, in the same mysterious fashion as he got up, and assists us down. We hold now a consultation as to whether it is possible to get down by a quicker way than that we went up, for the latter would involve three or four hours of hard work before we arrive at anything like ordinary snow-walking. We determine to see if it be possible to descend the sides of the snow-crater, on the brink of which we now stand. The crater is portentously steep, deeply lined with fresh snow, which glistens and melts in the powerful sun. The experiment is slightly hazardous, but we resolve to try. The crater appears to narrow gradually to a sort of funnel far down below, through which we expect to issue into the glacier beneath. At the sides of the funnel are rocks, which some one suggests might serve to break our fall should the snow go down with us; but their tender mercies seem to me doubtful. Cautiously, with steady balanced tread, we commit ourselves to the slope, distributing the weight of the body over as large a space of snow as possible, by fixing in the pole high up, and the feet far apart; for a slip or stumble now will probably dissolve the adhesion of the fresh not yet compacted mass, and we shall go down to the bottom in an avalanche.

Six paces to the right, then again to the left—we are at the mercy of those overhanging rocks just now, and the recent tracks of stones look rather suspicious. But all is silent; and soon we gain confidence, and congratulate ourselves on an expedient which has saved us hours of time and toil. Just to our right the snow is sliding by, first slowly, then faster: keep well out of the track of it; for underneath is a hard polished surface, and if your foot chance to light there, off you will probably shoot. The snow travels much faster than we do, or have any desire to do: we are like a coach travelling alongside of an express train, in popular phrase; we are going side by side with a small avalanche, though a real avalanche is a very different matter. Soon we come somewhat under the lee of the rocks, and now all risk is over; we are through the funnel, and floundering waist-deep, heedless of crevasses, in the comparatively level slopes beyond. We plunge securely down now in the deep snow, where care and caution had been requisite in crossing the frozen surface in the morning. At length we cast off the rope, and are on *terra firma*."

On our way down "we presently deviate a little. We perceive a long, low line of roof on the mountain-side, and are not mistaken in supposing that our favourite food will at this hour be found there in abundance. Twenty cows are moving their tails contentedly in line, under the shed; for Breuil is a

rich pasture valley, and in an autumn evening I have counted six herds, of from ninety to a hundred each, in separate clusters, like ants, along the stream in the distance. The friendly shepherd, in hoarse but hearty tones, urges us on as we drink. Bennen puts into his hand forty centimes for us both, for we have disposed of no small quantity; but he is with difficulty persuaded to accept so large a sum, and calls after us, 'C'est trop, c'est trop, messieurs' (It is too much, it is too much, sirs)."

The next year I again meditated the ascent of the Matterhorn, but Bennen's excellent judgment dissuaded me from the task. One year later I once again attempted it, with special arrangements for safety, and the account of this adventure I will now give you. Two guides and two porters were engaged. A specially strong rope was made in London for our work, "and guaranteed by its maker to bear a far greater strain than was ever likely to be thrown upon it. A light ladder was also constructed, the two sides of which might be carried like huge alpenstocks, while its steps, which could be inserted at any moment, were strapped upon a porter's back. Long iron nails and a hammer were also among our appliances. Actual experience considerably modified these arrangements, and compelled us in almost all cases to resort to methods as much open to a savage as to people acquainted with the mechanical arts." I engaged another excellent guide besides Bennen, called

Walters. "As we approached the mountain, there was nothing jubilant in our thoughts or conversation; the character of the work before us quelled presumption. The Matterhorn, in fact, was our temple, and we approached it with feelings not unworthy of so great a shrine." About noon on an August day we left the hotel; "first slowly sauntering along a small green valley, but soon meeting the bluffs which indicated our approach to uplifted land. The bright grass was quickly left behind, and soon afterwards we were toiling laboriously upward among the rocks. The Val Tournanche is bounded on the right by a chain of mountains, the higher end of which abutted in former ages against the Matterhorn. But now a gap is cut out between both, and a saddle stretches from one to the other. From this saddle a kind of *couloir* or passage runs downwards, widening out gradually, and blending with the gentler slopes below. We held on to the rocks to the left of this couloir, until we reached the base of a precipice which fell sheer from the summits above. Water trickled from the upper ledges; and the descent of a stone at intervals admonished us that gravity had here more serious missiles at command than the drippings of the liquefied snow. So we moved with prudent speed along the base of the precipice. Immediately afterwards we found ourselves upon the saddle, which stretches with the curvature of a chain to the base of the true Matterhorn. The opening out of the western mountains

from this point of view is grand and impressive; and with our eyes and hearts full of it we moved along, and soon came to rest upon the first steep crags of the real Monarch of the Alps. We paused to take refreshment; and had gathered up our traps, and bent to the work before us, when suddenly an explosion occurred overhead. We looked aloft, and saw in mid-air a solid shot from the Matterhorn describing its proper parabola or course, and finally splitting into fragments as it smote one of the rocky towers in front of us. Down the scattered fragments came, like a kind of spray, slightly wide of us, but still near enough to compel a sharp look-out. Two or three such explosions occurred; but we chose the back fin of the mountain for our track, and from this the falling stones were speedily deflected right or left. Before the set of sun we reached our place of bivouac. My tent was pitched in the shadow of a great rock, which seemed to offer a safe barrier against the cannonade from the heights." Fog crept up the valleys, and grew thicker "through a series of intermittences which a mountain-land alone can show. Sometimes all sight of the lower world was cut away,—then again the fog would melt and show us the sunny pastures of Breuil smiling far beneath. Sudden peals upon the heights, succeeded by the sound of tumbling rocks, announced from time to time the disintegration of the Matterhorn. We were quite swathed in fog when we retired to rest, and had scarcely a

hope that the morrow's sun would be able to dispel the gloom. Throughout the night the rocks roared intermittently as they swept down the adjacent couloir. I opened my eyes at midnight, and through a minute hole in the canvas of my tent saw a star. The heavens were swept clear of clouds.

"At four in the morning we had fairly started. The alternations of sun and frost have made wondrous havoc on the southern face of the mountain; but they have left brown-red masses of most imposing magnitude behind,—pillars, and towers, and splintered obelisks, grand in their hoariness—savage, but still softened by the colouring of age. The mountain is a gigantic ruin, but its firmer masonry will doubtless bear the shocks of another æon. We were compelled to quit the ridge, which now swept round and fronted us like a wall. The weather had cleft the rock clean away, leaving smooth sections, with here and there a ledge barely competent to give a man footing. It was manifest that for some time our fight must be severe. We examined the precipice, and exchanged opinions. Bennen swerved to the right and to the left to render his inspection complete. There was no choice; over this wall we must go, or give up the attempt. We reached its base, roped ourselves together, and were soon upon the face of the precipice. We advanced straining, bending, and clinging to the rocks, with a grasp like that of desperation, but with heads perfectly cool. We perched upon the ledges in

succession,—each in the first place making his leader secure, and accepting his help afterwards.

“The highest point of the renowned Matterhorn seemed within our grasp. ‘Well, we shall at all events win the lower summit,’ I said to Bennen. ‘That will not satisfy us,’ was his reply. We felt perfectly certain of success; not one amongst us harboured a thought of failure. ‘In an hour,’ cried Bennen, ‘the people of Zermatt shall see our flag planted yonder.’ Up we went in this spirit, with a forestalled triumph making our ascent a jubilee. We reached the first summit, and planted a flag upon it. From the point on which we planted our first flag-staff, a hacked and extremely acute edge ran and abutted against the final precipice. Along this we moved cautiously, while the face of the precipice came clearer and clearer into view. The ridge on which we stood ran right against it; it was the only means of approach, while ghastly abysses fell on either side. We sat down and inspected the place: no glass was needed, it was so near. All the men but Bennen at once voted it impossible. Directing their attention to a point at the base of the precipice, I asked them whether they could not reach that point without much risk. The reply was, ‘Yes.’ ‘Then,’ I said, ‘let us go there.’ We moved cautiously along, and reached the point aimed at. The ridge was here split by a deep cleft which separated it from the final precipice. So savage a spot I had never

seen, and I sat down upon it with the sickness of disappointed hope. The summit was almost within a stone's-throw of us, and the thought of retreat was bitter in the extreme. Bennen excitedly pointed out a track which he thought practicable. He spoke of danger, of difficulty, never of impossibility; but this was the ground taken by the other three men, and he was finally forced to accept defeat. Hacking a length of six feet from one of the sides of our ladder, we planted it on the spot where we stopped. It was firmly fixed.

"To get down the precipice we had scaled in the morning, we had to fix the remaining length of our ladder at the top, to tie our rope firmly on to it, and allow it to hang down the cliff. We slid down it in succession; and there it perhaps still dangles, for we could not detach it. A tempest of hail was here hurled against us, as if the Matterhorn, not content with shutting its door in our faces, meant to add an equivalent to the process of kicking us downstairs. The ice-pellets certainly hit us as bitterly as if they had been thrown in spite, and in the midst of this malicious cannonade we struck our tents and returned to Breuil."

Some years later, I made my last and successful ascent of the Matterhorn, but encountered many difficulties. "As my guide led the way up the rocks, I was next, then the other guide, and last of all the porters. Suddenly a yell issued from the leader,

‘Cachez-vous!’ (Hide yourselves). I crouched instinctively against the rock, which formed a by no means perfect shelter, when a boulder buzzed past me through the air, smote the rocks below me, and with a savage hum flew down to the lower glacier. Thus warned, we swerved to an *arête* or ridge, and when stones fell afterwards, they plunged to the right or left of us.”

Bad as this was, it did not equal my experience on the *séracs* of the Glacier du Géant. When looking round on my right hand, “as we toiled amid ice-pinnacles, crags, and chasms, I suddenly became aware that high above us a multitude of these crags and leaning columns of ice, on the stability of which we could not for an instant calculate, covered the precipitous incline. We were not long without an illustration of the peril of our situation. We had reached a position where massive ice-cliffs protected us on one side, while in front of us was a space more open than any we had yet passed, the reason being that the ice-avalanches had chosen it for their principal path. We had just stepped upon this space when a peal above us brought us to a stand. Crash! crash! crash! nearer and nearer; the sound becoming more continuous and confused as the descending masses broke into smaller blocks. Onward they came,—boulders half a ton and more in weight leaping down with a kind of maniacal fury, as if their sole mission were to crush the *séracs* to powder. Some of them on striking the air rebounded like

elastic balls, described parabolas through the air, again madly smote the ice, and scattered its dust like clouds in the atmosphere. Some blocks were deflected by the collision with the glacier, and were carried past us within a few yards of the spot where we stood. I had never before witnessed an exhibition of force at all comparable to this, and its proximity rendered that fearful which at a little distance would have been sublime. My companion, a young guide called Balmat, held his breath for a time, and then exclaimed, 'C'est terrible! il faut retourner' (It is terrible; we must return). In fact, while the avalanche continued, we could not at all calculate upon our safety. When we heard the first peal, we had instinctively retreated to the shelter of the ice-bastions; but what if one of those missiles struck the tower beside us! Would it be able to withstand the shock? We knew not." We waited a little while, "and my companion seemed to gather courage and assurance. I scanned the heights, and saw that a little more effort in an upward direction would place us in a much less perilous position, so far as the avalanches were concerned. I pointed this out to him, and we went forward. Once, indeed, for a minute or two, I felt anxious. We had to cross in the shadow of a tower of ice, of a loose and threatening character, which quite overhung our track. The freshly broken masses at its base, and at some distance below it, showed that it must have partially

given way some hours before. 'Don't speak or make any noise,' said my companion; and although rather sceptical as to the influence of speech in such a case, I held my tongue, and escaped from the dangerous vicinity as fast as my legs and alpenstock could carry me."

To return to the Matterhorn. We were, of course, compelled to spend the night upon the mountain. I was very cold at first, but my guides wrapped me in a sheepskin, which, as Joe has already told you, is a splendid article for keeping in warmth; and the morning was well advanced when I opened my eyes. We came to the flag-staff Bennen and I had left here years before. The last point was accomplished more easily than I had expected. "Above us a rope hung down the cliff, left here by my present guide on his first ascent. We reached the end of this rope, and some time was lost by my guide in assuring himself that it was not too much frayed by friction. Care in testing it was doubly necessary, for the rocks, bad in themselves, were here crusted with ice. The rope was in some places a mere hempen core, surrounded by a casing of ice, over which the hands slid helplessly. Even with the aid of a rope in this condition it required an effort to get to the top of the precipice, and we willingly halted there to take a minute's breath. The ascent was virtually accomplished, and a few minutes more of rapid climbing placed us on the lightning-smitten top. Thus ended the long contest between me and the Matterhorn."

Once going up the old Weissthor, with Bennen for my guide, we encountered as horrible a stone-storm as I ever experienced: the stones were flying about him as the intrepid man cut steps in the ice; I had to duck behind a boulder and let the huge projectile and the smaller fry behind shoot over my head. "‘Schnell’ (Quick), with its metallic clang, rung from the throat of Bennen; and never before had I seen his axe so promptly and vigorously applied. While this awful cannonade was directed upon us, we hung upon a slope of snow which had been pressed and polished to ice by the descending stones, and so steep that a single slip would have converted us into an avalanche also. Without steps of some kind we dared not set foot on the slope, and these had to be cut while the stone-shower was falling on us. Mere scratches in the ice, however, were all the axe could accomplish, and on these we steadied ourselves with the energy of desperate men. Bennen was first, and I followed him, while the stones flew thick beside and between us. My excellent guide thought of me more than of himself, and once caught upon the handle of his axe, as a cricketer catches a ball upon his bat, a lump which might have finished my climbing. The labour of his axe was for a time divided between the projectiles and the ice, while at every pause in the volley he cut a step and sprang forward! Had the peril been less, it would have been amusing to see our duckings and

contortions as we fenced with our swarming foes. A final jump landed us on an embankment out of the direct line of fire, and we thus escaped a danger extremely exciting to us all. We had next to descend an ice-slope to a place at which the rocks could be invaded. Here Andermatten, the porter, slipped, shot down the slope, knocked Bennen off his legs, but before the rope had jerked me off mine, the guide had stopped his flight. The porter's hat, however, followed the rushing stones. It was shaken off his head and lost. If discipline for eye, limb, head, and heart be of any value, we had it, and were still likely to have it here. A stiffer bit of rocks than ordinary intervened now and then, making us feel how possible it was to be entirely cut off. We at length reached real difficulty number one. All three of us were huddled together on a narrow ledge, with a smooth and vertical cliff above us. Bennen tried it in various ways, but he was several times forced back to the ledge. At length he managed to hook the fingers of one hand over the top of the cliff, while, to aid his grip, he tried to fasten his shoes against its face. But the nails scraped freely over the granular surface, and he had for a time to lift himself almost by a single arm. As he did so, he had as ugly a place beneath him as a human body could well be suspended over. We were tied to him, of course; but the jerk, had his grip failed, would have been terrible. He raised at length his

breast to a level with the top, and, leaning over it, he relieved the strain. Seizing upon something further on, he lifted himself quite to the top; then he tightened the rope, while I slowly worked myself over the face of the cliff after him. We were soon side by side, and immediately afterwards Andermatten, with his long unkempt hair, and face white with excitement, hung midway between heaven and earth, supported by the rope alone. We hauled him up bodily, and as he stood upon the ledge his limbs quivered beneath him." Next we scaled a second cliff, "resembling, though in a modified form, that just described. Bennen muttered aloud, 'Had we only held on to the snow!' He had soon reason to emphasize his ejaculation. After climbing for some time, we reached a smooth vertical face of rock, from which, right or left, there was no escape, and over which we must go. Bennen first tried it unaided, but was obliged to recoil. Without a lift of five or six feet the thing was impossible. When a boy I have often climbed a wall by placing a comrade in a stooping posture, with his hands and head against the wall, getting on his back, and permitting him gradually to straighten himself till he became erect. This plan I now proposed to Bennen, offering to take him on my back. 'No, sir,' he replied, 'not you; I will try it with Andermatten.' I could not persuade him; so Andermatten got upon the ledge, and fixed his knee for Bennen to stand upon.

In this position my guide obtained a precarious grip, just sufficient to enable him to pass with safety from the knee to the shoulder. He paused here, and pulled away such splinters as might prove treacherous if he laid hold of them. He at length found a firm one; and had next to urge himself, not fairly upward, for right above us the top was entirely out of reach, but obliquely along the face of the cliff."

["Terrible!" ejaculated Mrs. Norton.

Uncle Fred smiled, and continued:—]

"He succeeded, anchored himself, and called upon me to advance. The rope was tight, it is true, but it was not vertical, so that a slip would cause me to swing like a pendulum over the cliff's face."

["Fred," said Mrs. Norton, "it is perfectly horrible. You never ought to have risked your life so madly."]

"With considerable effort," continued Uncle Fred, smiling at his sister, "I managed to hand Bennen his axe, and while doing so, my own staff escaped me, and was irrecoverably lost. I ascended Andermatten's shoulder as Bennen did, but my body was not long enough to bridge the way to the guide's arm; so I had to risk the possibility of becoming a pendulum. A little protrusion gave my left foot some support. I suddenly raised myself a yard, and here was met by the iron grip of my guide. In a second I was safely stowed away in a neighbouring fissure. Andermatten now remained. He first detached himself from the rope, tied it round his coat

and knapsack, which were drawn up. The rope was again let down, and the porter tied it firmly round his waist. It was not made in England, and was perhaps lighter than it ought to be; so to help it hands and feet were scraped with spasmodic energy over the rock. He struggled too much; and Bennen cried sharply, 'Quietly, quietly; no fear.' The poor fellow looked very pale and bewildered as his bare head emerged above the ledge. His body soon followed. 'He was very white,' Bennen remarked to me. The young man seemed to regard the guide with a kind of awe. 'Sir,' he exclaimed, 'you would not find another guide in Switzerland to lead you up here.' Nor, indeed, in Bennen's behalf be it spoken, would he have done so, if he could have avoided it; but we had fairly got into a net, the meshes of which must be resolutely cut. We had difficulties, but no more perils. We sprang up the last cliff, which formed a sloping stair, and the magnificent snow-field of the G rner glacier immediately opened to our view."

On my making the ascent of the Jungfrau with some friends, a catastrophe of an alarming character occurred on a part of the route where we had not the slightest expectation that any accident was likely to occur. "To me, though not new, the region had lost no trace of the interest with which I first viewed it. We moved briskly along the frozen incline towards the Grotto of the Faulberg, where we were to pass the night, where already two porters had been de-

spatched with our provisions. After a couple of hours' march, we saw a solitary human being standing on the lateral moraine of the glacier, near the point where we were to quit it for the cave of the Faulberg. At first this man excited no attention. He stood and watched us, but did not come towards us, until finally our curiosity was aroused by observing that he was one of our own two men. The glacier here is always cut by crevasses, which, while they present no real difficulty, require care. We approached our porter, but he never moved; and when we came up to him he looked stupid, and did not speak until he was spoken to. Bennen addressed him in the *patois* of the place, and he answered in the same *patois*. His answer must have been more than usually obscure, for Bennen misunderstood the most important part of it. He exclaimed, turning to us, 'Walters is killed!' Walters was the guide at the *Æggischhorn*, with whom, in the present instance, we had nothing to do. 'No, not Walters,' responded the man; 'it is my comrade that is killed.' Bennen looked at him with a wild, bewildered stare. 'How killed?' he exclaimed. 'Lost in a crevasse,' was the reply. We were all so stunned that for some moments we did not quite seize the import of the terrible statement.

"Bennen at length tossed his arms in the air, exclaiming, 'What am I to do?' He himself had found the young fellow and engaged him for us; he

had the reputation of being both courageous and strong. 'He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.' With the swiftness that some ascribe to dreams, I surrounded the fact of his loss with imaginary adjuncts, one of which was that the man had been drawn dead from the crevasse, and was now a corpse in the cave of the Faulberg; for I took it for granted that, had he been still entombed, his comrade would have run or called for our aid. Several times in succession the porter affirmed that the missing man was dead. 'How does he know that he is dead?' one of us demanded. 'A man is sometimes rendered insensible by a fall without being killed.' This question was repeated in German, but met with the same dogmatic response. 'Where is the man?' I asked. 'There,' replied the porter, stretching his arm towards the glacier. 'In the crevasse?' A stolid 'Ja' (Yes), was the answer. 'Lead the way to the place;' and he led the way.

"We were soon beside a wide and jagged cleft, which resembled a kind of cave more than an ordinary crevasse. This cleft had been spanned by a snow-bridge, now broken, and to the edge of which footsteps could be traced. The glacier at the place was considerably torn, but simple patience was the only thing needed to unravel its complexity. This quality our porter had lacked; and hoping to make shorter work of it, he attempted to cross the bridge. It gave way, and he went down, carrying an im-

mense load of *débris* along with him. We looked into the hole, at one end of which the vision was cut short by darkness, while immediately under the broken bridge it was crammed with snow and shattered icicles. We saw nothing more. We listened with strained attention; and from the depths of the glacier issued a low moan. Its repetition assured us that it was no delusion,—the man was still alive. Bennen from the first had been extremely excited. When he heard the moaning he became almost frantic. He attempted to get into the crevasse, but was obliged to recoil. It was quite plain that a second life was in danger, for my guide seemed to have lost all self-control. I placed my hand heavily upon his shoulder, and admonished him that upon his coolness depended the life of his friend. ‘If you behave like a man, we shall save him; if like a woman, he is lost.’ A first-rate rope accompanied the party, but, unfortunately, it was with the man in the crevasse. Coats, waistcoats, and braces were instantly taken off and knotted together. I watched Bennen while this work was going on: his hands trembled with excitement, and his knots were evidently insecure. The last junction complete, he exclaimed, ‘Now, let me down.’ ‘Not until each one of these knots has been tested; not an inch!’ ‘Ah, sir,’ he replied to one of my remonstrances, ‘are you not firm?’ Two of the knots gave way, and one of the waistcoats

also proved too tender for the strain. The *débris* was about forty feet from the surface of the glacier, but two intermediate prominences afforded a kind of footing. Bennen was dropped down upon one of these; I followed, being let down by my companion and the other porter. Bennen then descended the remaining distance, and was followed by me. More could not find room. The shape and size of the cavity were such as to produce a kind of resonance, which rendered it difficult to fix the precise spot from which the sound issued; but the moaning continued, becoming to all appearance gradually feebler. Fearing to wound the man, the ice-rubbish was cautiously rooted away; it rang curiously as it fell into the adjacent gloom. A layer two or three feet thick was thus removed; and finally from the frozen mass, and so bloodless as to be almost as white as the surrounding snow, issued a single human hand. The fingers moved. Round it we rooted, cleared the arm, and reached the knapsack, which we cut away. We also regained our rope. The man's head was then laid bare, and a brandy flask was immediately at his lips. He tried to speak, but his words jumbled themselves to a dull moan. Bennen's feelings got the better of him at intervals; he wrought like a hero, but at times he needed guidance and stern admonition. The arms once free, we passed the rope underneath them, and tried to draw the man out;

but the ice-fragments round him had regelated so as to form a solid case. Thrice we essayed to draw him up, thrice we failed; he had literally to be hewn out of the ice, and not until his last foot was extricated were we able to lift him. By pulling him from above and pushing him from below, the man was at length raised to the surface of the glacier. For an hour we had been in the crevasse in shirt-sleeves,—the poor porter had been in it for two hours,—and the dripping ice had drenched us. Bennen, moreover, had worked with the energy of madness, and now the reaction came. He shook as if he would fall to pieces. The rescued man was helpless, unable to stand, unable to utter an articulate sentence. Bennen proposed to carry him down the glacier towards home. Had this been attempted the man would certainly have died upon the ice. Bennen thought he could carry him for two hours; but the guide underrated his own exhaustion and overrated the vitality of the porter. ‘It cannot be thought of,’ I said; ‘to the cave of Faulberg, where we must tend him as well as we can.’ We got him to the side of the glacier, where Bennen took him on his back; in ten minutes he sank under his load. It was now my turn, so I took the man on my back and plodded on with him as far as I was able. Helping each other thus by turns, we reached the mountain grot. The sun had set, and the crown of the Jungfrau was embedded in amber light. I

started in search of help, but was obliged to give up; thrice I found myself in difficulty, and the light was visibly departing. The conviction deepened that persistence would be folly. I returned. All our dry clothes were wrapped around our patient. Hot-water bottles were placed at his feet, and his back was briskly rubbed. He continued to groan a long time; but finally both this and the trembling ceased. Bennen watched him solemnly; and at length muttered in anguish, 'Sir, he is dead!' I leaned over the man, and found him breathing gently; I felt his pulse—it was beating tranquilly. 'Not dead, dear old Bennen; he will be able to crawl home with us in the morning.' The prediction was justified by the event; and two days afterwards we saw him at Laax, minus a bit of his ear, with a bruise upon his cheek and a few scars upon his hand, but without a broken bone or serious injury of any kind. The self-denying conduct of the second porter made us forget his stupidity—it may have been stupefaction. As I lay there wet through the long hours of that dismal night, I almost registered a vow never to tread upon a glacier again. But human emotions vary with the distance from their origin, and a year afterwards I was again upon the ice."

And now I have another much sadder tragedy to tell. After all the noble conduct of Bennen for the safety of others, it seems intensely sad that he should have died a victim to his perilous calling; but so it

was. I must curtail for you the interesting account written by one of the party, who himself narrowly escaped the death which befell his friend and this faithful guide. M. Gossett and M. Boissonnet left Sion at 2.15 one February morning, with Bennen to mount the Haut de Cry. Three men—Nance, Rebot, and Bevard—accompanied them as local guides and porters. "The night was splendid, the sky cloudless, and the moon shining brightly. We went up through the vineyards, then on to a very good path towards the Col de Chéville. Having followed this for about three hours, we struck off and began zigzagging up the mountain side through a pine-forest. We had passed what may be called the snow-line in winter a little above two thousand feet. We had not ascended for more than a quarter of an hour in this pine-forest before the snow got very deep and very soft. We had to change leader every five or six minutes, and even thus our progress was remarkably slow. We saw clearly that should the snow be as soft above the fir region, we should have to give up the ascent. As we had expected, however, the snow was in much better state when once we were above the woods. For some time we advanced pretty rapidly. The peak was glistening before us, and the idea of success put us in high spirits. Our good fortune did not last long: we soon came to snow frozen on the surface, and capable of bearing for a few steps, and then giving way. But this was

nothing compared to the trouble of pulling up through the pine-wood, so, instead of making us grumble, it only excited our hilarity. Bennen was in a particularly good humour, and laughed aloud at our combined efforts to get out of the holes we every now and then made in the snow. We made a second observation with our aneroid, and found, rather to our astonishment and dismay, that we had only risen one thousand feet in the last three hours. During the last half-hour we had found a little hard snow, so we had all hope of success. Thinking we might advance better on the arête, we took to it, and rose along it for some time. It soon became cut up by rocks, so we took to the snow again. It turned out to be here hard frozen, so that we reached the real foot of the peak without the slightest difficulty. It was steeper than I had expected it would be, judging from the valley of the Rhone. Bennen looked at it with decided pleasure. Having completed his survey, he proposed to take the eastern arête, or ridge, as in doing so we should gain at least two hours. Rebot had been over it in summer, and was of Bennen's opinion. Two or three of the party did not like the idea much, so there was a discussion on the probable advantages and disadvantages of the north-east and east arêtes. We were losing time, so Bennen cut matters short by saying, 'I will be the first on the arête!' Thus saying, he made for the east arête. It looked very narrow, and what was worse, it

was considerably cut up by high rocks, the intervals between its teeth being filled up with snow. We had to go up a steep snow-field to gain it. During the ascent we sank about one foot deep at every step. Bennen did not seem to like the look of the snow very much. He asked the local guides whether avalanches ever came down this couloir, to which they answered that our position was perfectly safe. We had mounted on the northern side, and having arrived at one hundred and fifty feet from the top, we began crossing it on a horizontal curve.' We were walking in the following order,—Bevard, Nance, Bennen, myself, Boissonnet, and Rebot. Having crossed over about three quarters of the breadth of the couloir, the two leading men suddenly sank considerably above their waists. Bennen tightened the rope. The snow was too deep to think of getting out of the hole they had made, so they advanced one or two steps, dividing the snow with their bodies. Bennen turned round and told us he was afraid of starting an avalanche. We asked whether it would not be better to return and cross the couloir higher up. To this the three men from Ardon opposed themselves; they mistook the proposed precaution for fear, and the two leading men continued their work. After three or four steps gained in the aforesaid manner, the snow became hard again. Bennen had not moved; he was evidently undecided what he should do. As soon, how-

ever, as he saw hard snow again, he advanced and crossed parallel to, but above, the furrow the Ardon men had made. Strange to say, the snow supported him. While he was passing, I observed that the leader, Bevard, had about twenty feet of rope coiled round his shoulder. I, of course, at once told him to uncoil it and get on the arête, from which he was not more than fifteen feet distant. Bennen then told me to follow. I tried his steps, but sank up to my waist in the very first. So I went through the furrow, holding my elbows close to my body, so as not to touch the sides. This furrow was about twelve feet long, and as the snow was good on the other side, we had all come to the false conclusion that the snow was accidentally softer there than elsewhere. Boissonnet then advanced. He had made but a few steps, when we heard a deep cutting sound. The snow-field split in two about fourteen to fifteen feet above us. The cleft was at first quite narrow, not more than an inch broad. An awful silence ensued; it lasted but a few seconds, and then it was broken by Bennen's voice, 'Wir sind alle verloren' (We are all lost). His words were slow and solemn, and those who knew him felt what they really meant when spoken by such a man. They were his last words. I drove my alpenstock into the snow, and brought the weight of my body to bear on it; it went into within three inches of the top. I then waited. It was an awful

moment of suspense. I turned my head towards Bennen to see whether he had done the same thing. To my astonishment, I saw him turn round, face the valley, and stretch out both arms. The ground on which we stood began to move slowly, and I felt the utter uselessness of my alpenstock. I soon sank up to my shoulders, and began descending backwards. From that moment I saw nothing of what happened to the rest of the party. With a good deal of trouble I succeeded in turning round. The speed of the avalanche increased rapidly, and before long I was covered up with snow and in utter darkness. I was suffocating, when, with a jerk, I suddenly came to the surface again. The rope had caught, most probably, on a rock, and this was evidently the moment when it broke. I was on a wave of the avalanche, and saw it before me as I was carried down. It was the most awful sight I ever witnessed. The head of the avalanche was already at the spot where we had made our last halt. The head alone was preceded by a thick cloud of snow-dust; the rest of the avalanche was clear. Around me I heard the horrid hissing of the snow, and far before me the thundering of the foremost part of the avalanche. To prevent myself sinking again, I made use of my arms much in the same way as when swimming in a standing position. At last I noticed that I was moving slower; then I saw the pieces of snow in front of me stop at some yards' distance; then the

snow straight before me stopped, and I heard on a large scale the same creaking sound that is produced when a heavy cart passes over hard-frozen snow in winter. I felt that I also had stopped, and instantly threw up both arms to protect my head, in case I should again be covered up. I had stopped, but the snow behind me was still in motion; its pressure on my body was so strong that I thought I should be crushed to death. This tremendous pressure lasted but a short time, and ceased as suddenly as it had begun. I was then covered up by snow coming from behind me. My first impulse was to try and uncover my head; but this I could not do, the avalanche had frozen by pressure the moment it stopped, and I was frozen in. Whilst trying vainly to move my arms, I suddenly became aware that the hands, as far as the wrists, had the faculty of motion. The conclusion was easy—they must be above the snow. I set to work as well as I could; it was time, for I could not have held out much longer. At last I saw a faint glimmer of light. The crust above my head was getting thinner, and it let a little air pass, but I could not reach it any more with my hands. The idea struck me that I might pierce it with my breath. After several efforts I succeeded in doing so, and felt suddenly a rush of air towards my mouth. I saw the sky again through a little round hole. A dead silence reigned around me. I was so surprised to be still alive, and so persuaded at the

first moment that none of my fellow-sufferers had survived, that I did not even think of shouting for them. I then made vain efforts to extricate my arms, but found it impossible; the most I could do was to join the ends of my fingers, but they could not reach the snow any longer. After a few minutes I heard a man shouting. What a relief it was to know that I was not the sole survivor—to know that perhaps he was not frozen in, and could come to my assistance! I answered; the voice approached, but seemed uncertain where to go, and yet it was now quite near. A sudden exclamation of surprise. Rebot had seen my hands. He cleared my head in an instant, and was about to try and cut me out completely, when I saw a foot above the snow, and so near to me that I could touch it with my arms, although they were not quite free yet. I at once tried to move the foot; it was my poor friend's. A pang of agony shot through me as I saw that the foot did not move. Poor Boissonnet had lost sensation, and was perhaps already dead. Rebot did his best. After some time he wished me to help him; so he freed my arms a little more, so that I could make use of them. I could do but little, for Rebot had taken the axe from my shoulder as soon as he had cleared my head. Before coming to me, Rebot had helped Nance out of the snow; he was lying nearly horizontally, and was not much covered over. Nance found Bevard, who was upright in the snow,

but covered up to the head. After about twenty minutes the two last-named guides came up. I was at length taken out: the snow had to be cut with the axe down to my feet before I could be pulled out. A few minutes after one o'clock we came to my poor friend's face. I wished the body to be taken out completely; but nothing could induce the guides to work any longer, from the moment they saw that it was too late to save him. They were nearly as incapable of doing anything as I was. When I was taken out, the cord had to be cut. We tried the end going towards Bennen, but could not move it; it went nearly straight down, and showed us that there was the grave of the bravest guide the Valais ever had and ever will have. The cold had done its work on us; we could stand it no longer, and began the descent. We followed the frozen avalanche for about twenty-five minutes, that being the easiest way of progressing, and then took the track we had made in the morning. In five hours we reached Ardon."

Bennen's body, as well as that of Monsieur Boissonnet, were found a few days afterwards. I think this sad story will give you some idea of the perils of the mountains. The adventures of Alpine tourists so abound that I find it difficult to bring this evening's paper to a conclusion. A young guide called Zybach showed once a ready wit which stood him and us in good stead. We were up amongst the ice-

world of glaciers and snow of the Schreckhorn range. "We were upon a sort of promontory, and further progress along the side of the glacier was quite impracticable, the rock becoming absolutely precipitous. The case began to look awkward. After casting about for a while, and seeing no outlet towards the glacier, I thought of attempting a passage in the opposite direction, by climbing up some very steep rocks behind us, and seeking a mode of descent on the other side towards the mass of the Mettenberg. I had got a good way up the rocks, until I found that it was nearly impossible to clamber further, when I turned round to see what my companions below were about. They were scattered along the brink of the glacier, seemingly in rather hopeless mood, when suddenly I observed young Zybach spring from the edge of the rock and disappear from sight. The others hastened to the spot which he had left, and their alarmed and excited gestures showed that they thought something serious had happened. I descended as fast as I could, and soon joined them. They shouted loudly, receiving, of course, no reply, and pointed out a crevasse, down which they declared that Zybach had disappeared. I must own that I was at a loss to understand the proceeding, though I could not feel any alarm about so bold and active a mountaineer as young Zybach had shown himself; but I was well pleased when, after a short time, we saw him scramble up out of a crevasse some sixty or

seventy yards from where we stood. He was quite unhurt, but much begrimed with the white glacier mud, and soon made his way towards us. Selecting one of the projecting pinnacles of ice that approached nearest to the rock, he proceeded to cut away the upper crumbling surface with his pole-axe; and on reaching the solid ice within, he cleared out two or three footsteps in the slippery edge. There was now a secure place on which to rest the foot; a short striding jump from the rock to the ice was enough to clear the intervening space; but the edge of the ice was narrow and sharp, and below was a disagreeable-looking chasm, where the rock gradually shelved under the glacier at a depth that I did not care to measure. I own that I should have found it nervous work, but for the security afforded by that constant friend of the Alpine traveller—the rope. One end was passed to Zymbach, the other being held by the older guide, standing on the rock behind us; and each of us in turn, grasping this in the right hand, had no difficulty in alighting on the edge of the ice; and the guide, who came last, holding the end of the rope, had the security that, even if his feet did miss the mark, we were all ready to draw him up again to where we stood. Young Zymbach showed both skill and courage on this occasion. Failing every direct means for reaching the surface of the glacier in safety, he had noticed a smooth piece of ice on which it was possible to alight by a jump from the



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rock ; but this was cut off from the adjoining glacier by impracticable crevasses. His plan was to descend one of these crevasses, and make his way under the glacier, until he should find some other crevasse through which it might be possible to ascend again to the light of day. The ice does not touch the rock at every point, but, on the contrary, leaves hollow spaces through which it is often practicable for a man to crawl. A knowledge of this fact enabled Zybach to extricate us from a position where we should otherwise have passed a very uncomfortable night. It is clear that, in case of necessity, we might all of us, though with some damage to our clothes, have followed the course which he took for himself ; and it is worth remembering by glacier travellers, that in a case of difficulty where they can find no road over the glacier, they may discover, at a pinch, a practicable way under it."

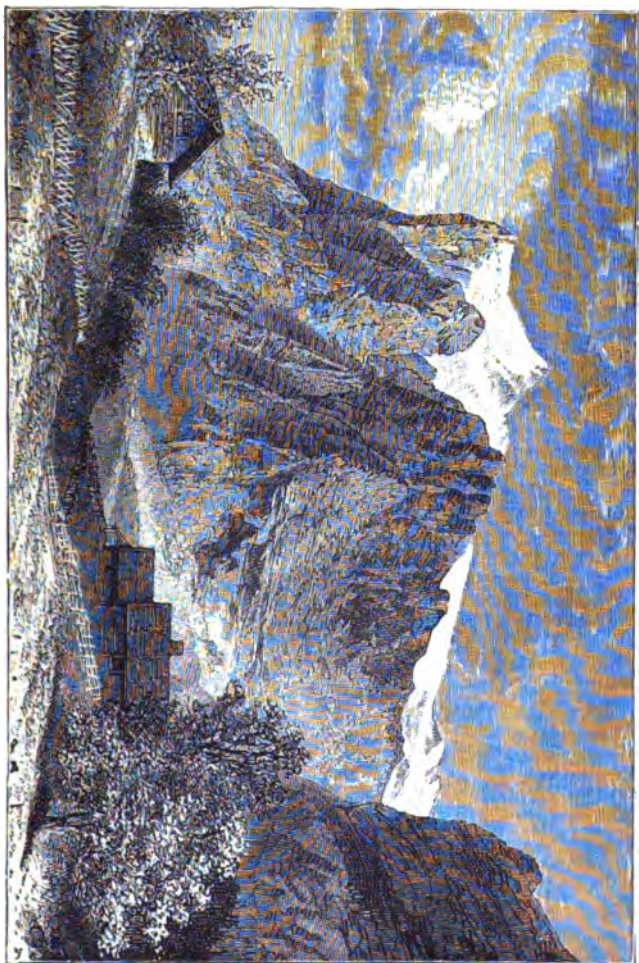
The baths of Stachelberg are in the canton of Glarus, and the scenery around is very romantic. I will finish my reminiscences with a Sunday visit to a chalet :—"I followed a steep path that ascends immediately behind the baths to a prettily wooded table-land studded with a number of the real old-fashioned Swiss chalets, which are so pleasing when found in the right place. I found most of them empty, nearly the entire population having gone down to the church in the valley below. At length I saw an old man, upwards of eighty years of age, sitting with a Bible

in his hand, near the window of his habitation. He at once put down his book, asked if he could render me any service, and invited me to come in and visit his humble abode. Everything was of the simplest kind, but exceedingly clean and nice. The principal room had a slate table, and a stove in the centre, with some well-scrubbed deal benches round them. On each side was a recess containing a bed, covered with a thickly-quilted counterpane; and on the walls were hung some weapons of the chase, and some small coloured prints. In one corner of the room was a curious old chest, made of slate let into wood. The slates came from the Blattenberg, in the Sernft Thal, a mountain which is said to contain some of the best slate in Europe for the purpose of writing. Slates are exported from the Sernft Thal to all parts of the world for the use of schools. This chest, the old man told me, had belonged to his great-grandfather, and had been in his family one hundred and fifty years. In it he was in the habit of keeping his treasures, including the family Bible, which had been published more than a hundred years. On the slate that formed the top of the chest, he told me his children and grandchildren, as well as his father and grandfather, had learned to write; but in alluding to the rapid advances of the age, he said with a sigh, but at the same time showing some feeling of pride at the idea, that his youngest grandchild, a pretty little girl about seven years old, whom I afterwards

saw, insisted on learning to write on paper! After some further conversation, I expressed a desire to leave; but he entreated me so earnestly to wait until his son and daughter-in-law returned, which he said they would do very shortly, that I could not resist complying with his wishes, especially as he told me that his sight had got so weak of late that he could hardly manage to read. I read him a couple of chapters out of his German Bible; and he was so grateful for what he called my kindness, that he made me write my name and the day of the month on the fly-leaf of his Bible. His gratitude was only exceeded by the amazement and delight of the rest of the family when they came home and found me so employed. They insisted on my partaking of their frugal repast,—cheese, brown bread, and raspberries,—to which, out of compliment to me, they added some excellent cream and mountain honey. And when at length I left, the whole party, with the exception of the old man, who could not walk very far, accompanied me for some distance down the mountain, and on parting again thanked me. The little boy, into whose pocket I had dropped a small coin, after a look at his father, ran after me and returned it."

[Here Uncle Fred closed his manuscript book.

"But oh! Uncle Fred," said Joe, "you haven't said a word about the Wetterhorn, and that's what we wanted to hear. You must tell us that story."



THE WETTERHORN FROM GRINDELWALD.

"Tell you about the Wetterhorn?"

"Yes; and the flag, and the fir-tree," said Tom.

Uncle Fred laughed. "It is evident you know it already. I believe I have told it you a dozen times, and I have purposely omitted to give you a repetition of it to-night."

"But we want it, Uncle Fred. Just tell it again, like the best of uncles, that you are," said Joe coaxingly; and the other boys, and the girls too, chorused the wish. Thus entreated, Uncle Fred began:—]

We were quite a strong party that undertook what, as far as I know, was the first ascent of the Wetterhorn,—four guides, a porter, and myself. When I was ready to set off, the "Flagge," which two of the guides had pressed to be allowed to take with us to plant on the summit, was not ready, so two of them stayed behind to wait for it, while Balmat and Sampson and I started at once. I was very much surprised when I was told that this flag was being made at the blacksmith's, which seemed an odd place to go for such an article; but I concluded he was a man of versatile genius, and asked no more questions. At the foot of the first glacier we passed a chalet, where dwelt the father of Bohren, one of the guides, who had just overtaken us. All his friends came out to wish him "God-speed." "He took it all very philosophically; borrowed a better pipe than his own, and a larger stock of tobacco, and set off again, smoking like a chimney-pot. After scram-

bling up a wall of rock, we came to a narrow goat-path, which we traversed in a direction towards Grindelwald, till it arrives at the corner of the mountain, which is almost as square as if it were the work of the mason; it there takes a turn, and continues along the other face of the mountain. On a little platform of sloping turf at the angle, we lay down to wait for the flag. We had not long to wait. A loud, clear, ringing shout of greeting, and a cheery laugh, announced the presence of Lauener; and it did not require two glances to show why he had sought the blacksmith for the 'Flagge.' Strapped on his back was a sheet of iron, three feet long and two feet wide, with two rings strongly welded to one of the shorter edges, and he stood leaning upon a bar of the same metal, ten or twelve feet long, and as thick as a man's thumb. He pointed first to the 'Flagge,' and then with an exulting look on high, and set up a shout of triumph which made the rocks ring again. Bohren took up the note, and a chorus of wild shouts came faintly borne on the air from the valley below. It was Bohren's relatives from the chalet." The other two guides did not admire either the flag or the shouting, and thought the former a piece of folly. "I could not help admiring Lauener's figure as he stood there, straight as an arrow, more than six feet high, spare, muscular, and active, health and vigour glowing in his open and manly countenance, his clear blue eye sparkling with vivacity and good temper, a

slight dash of rough and careless swagger in his attitude and manner, which suited well with the wild scenery around, and made him look like the genius of the place."

Up we went, over rocks and a bank of moraine, slipping uncomfortably often. "Several clear streams poured in beautiful showers over a ledge of rock; above the head of one, a delicate rainbow played fitfully—a glory placed there by the Eternal Hand." Rocks, glaciers, crags, boulders had to be climbed; and at last we came "to a stone under which we were to pass the night. It was a splendid, wild scene—no distant prospect, but we were in the very heart of the crags and the ice, surrounded by some of the grandest glaciers and precipices in the Alps. Our sleeping-den consisted of a low arched cave, formed by two or three rocks, one of which, somewhat hollow on the under side, had fallen curiously upon the others, so as to make a kind of vaulted roof. There was barely room for one to enter at a time, and we were obliged to creep backwards through the aperture. A covering of mountain hay, left by the hunters who used the cave, gave an unexpected look of warmth and comfort to the place. A fire was made, and some black coffee prepared. A mug of this without milk, a hunch of cold veal, and a log of sour bread, carved with one's pocket-knife, formed the evening repast. But it was a cheerful meal and a hearty one, for all that; and the great big stars

looked down upon us with a merry twinkle in their roguish eyes, as if they too enjoyed the fun. There was no moon, and the vast white glaciers gleamed faintly through the night, like the battlements of phantom castles." Then we went to our rest. "When we were all arranged, the candle was put out, and we were left in the thick darkness. Suddenly the three Swiss struck up a hymn in German. They sang well; there was a good tenor, and a rich, manly bass. The effect, in that strange place of 'darkness visible,' couched as we were beneath the shadows of the eternal mountains, was inexpressibly solemn. When the song of praise was sung, no one spoke; and presently the deep breathing all around announced that most of them were sunk in sleep." But I cannot say I enjoyed my night, or could indulge comfortably in slumber. The air of the cave soon became insufferable, for they had closed the aperture by which we entered, to keep us the warmer. Had I been near the entrance, I should have made my escape very soon; but being farthest in, in the place of honour, I could only do so by running the chance of disturbing all the rest, who perchance had very hard work before them on the morrow. "I waxed restless and feverish, and all chance of sleep deserted me. I passed a miserable night. I could not, however, fail to be struck with the solemnity of the place and time. All night long I lay in palpable darkness, beneath a hollow rock and on a bed of stones, with

a foaming glacier torrent brawling past my head, not six feet from me, save for the noise of which all nature was still and silent as the grave." At last I could endure it no longer, and found Balmat was also anxious to get out. "We got across the sleepers somehow, knocked out the stones at the aperture, and emerged. Oh, how grateful was that cool fresh air! How refreshing that draught at the mountain torrent! The stars were shining as I never saw them before in my life, like so many balls of fire in the black concave; the glaciers were sparkling in the soft light of the waning moon, now in her fourth quarter. At half-past four we started. It was still dark when we set off, and for some time we groped our way by the help of a lantern." Up amongst *débris*, rocks, and boulders, we were frequently stumbling and falling; "very often the ledges which gave us foothold were but an inch or two wide;" and then along the crest of wedge-shaped pieces of rock. "It was nervous work, and certainly the worst piece of scrambling I ever did. Every bit of rock had to be tried before it was trusted, and many were the fragments which came out when put to the test, and went crashing down till out of sight, making an avalanche of other stones as they fell. It was a long quarter of an hour before we were all safely landed on the snow beyond. A few minutes later we came to the brink of a precipice, and looked down on the rich and verdant valley of Grindelwald. When I

was ready for breakfast, I found all the provisions were tainted with garlic—the object of my peculiar detestation.

We now fastened ourselves together with ropes, and commenced the last ascent. It commenced in deep snow, and was rapid; but then the snow covering became thinner, and steps had to be cut. About ten we reached the last rocks, a set of black sloping calcareous rocks, much disintegrated by the weather. Here we unharnessed ourselves and sat down to rest; and whilst resting beheld two figures dressed like peasants, one carrying on his back a young fir-tree, branches, leaves, and all. At first Lauener pronounced them to be ‘Gems-Jägers’ (chamois-hunters), but we soon decided they would not seek game in this direction, and we were forced to come to the unwelcome conclusion that they desired to have the glory of the first ascent, and intended, after all our expense, trouble, and preparation, to be the pioneers of the Wetterhorn. Some of my guides were vehemently indignant; and after a while a parley was entered into by the strangers and ourselves by loud shouts, and the piratical adventurers promised to wait for us on the rocks above, whither we arrived very soon after them. They turned out to be two chamois-hunters who had heard of our intended ascent, and resolved to be even with us, and plant their tree side by side with our ‘Flagge.’ But anger was appeased when they showed themselves amenable

to reason. They were willing that we should be the first; so a cake of chocolate was presented to them by Balmat, who called them 'bons enfants,' and tranquillity reigned between the rival forces. A glance upwards showed that no easy task awaited us. In front rose a steep curtain of glacier, surmounted about five or six hundred feet above us by an overhanging cornice of ice and frozen snow, edged with a fantastic fringe of pendants and enormous icicles. This formidable obstacle bounded our view, and stretched from end to end of the ridge. Two of the guides went in advance, cutting steps; while the blocks of ice they hewed out rolled down upon us and shot past, and were precipitated into a fathomless abyss beneath. For nearly an hour the men laboured at their difficult task, in which it was impossible to give them help; but at length they neared the cornice, and it was thought advisable that we should begin to follow them. We were all tied together,—the two chamois-hunters had made common cause with us. The cornice curled over towards us like the crest of a wave, breaking at irregular intervals along the line into pendants and inverted pinnacles of ice, many of which hung down to the full length of a tall man's height. They cast a ragged shadow on the wall of rock behind, which was hard and glassy, not flecked with a spot of snow. After consultation, it was resolved to cut boldly into the ice, and endeavour to hew deep enough to get a

sloping passage on to the dome beyond. A few strokes of Lauener's powerful arm brought down the projecting crest, which, after rolling a few feet, fell headlong over the brink of the arête. We all looked on in breathless anxiety. Suddenly a startling cry of surprise and triumph rang through the air. A great block of ice bounded from the top of the parapet, and before it had well lighted on the glacier Lauener exclaimed, 'Ich schaue den blauen Himmel' (I see the blue sky). A thrill of astonishment and delight ran through our frames. Our enterprise had succeeded! We were almost upon the actual summit! That wave above us was the very peak itself! Lauener's blows flew with redoubled energy. The guides passed through and widened the opening; a hand grasped mine; I stepped across, and had passed the ridge of the Wetterhorn! The instant before, I had been face to face with a blank wall of ice. One step, and the eye took in a boundless expanse of crag and glacier, peak and precipice, mountain and valley, lake and plain. The whole world seemed to lie at my feet. The next moment I was almost appalled by the awfulness of our position. A few yards of glittering ice at our feet, and then, nothing between us and the green slopes of Grindelwald, nine thousand feet beneath! After the low ejaculations of surprise, a long pause of breathless silence ensued. We felt as in the more immediate presence of Him who had reared this tremendous pinnacle, and be-

neath the 'majestical roof' of whose deep blue heaven we stood, poised, as it seemed, half-way between earth and sky. We hastened in a few minutes to place ourselves astride the ridge that Lauener and Sampson, by cutting away a length of about ten feet of the overhanging cornice, had exposed. It was a saddle, or more properly a kind of knife-edge of ice; for I never sat on so narrow-backed a horse. We worked ourselves along this ridge, seated ourselves in a long row upon it, and untied the ropes. After a few minutes, when we had become more accustomed to the situation, I ventured to stand upright on that narrow edge, not four inches wide, and then at length I became fully aware of the extent and magnificence of the panorama. While I thus stood where there was not room to place my two feet side by side, the guides were busy driving the long iron bar of the 'Flagge' into the solid ice. I took my turn at it for a minute. It was planted five or six feet deep in the glacier, and seemed firm enough to defy the tempest, even at this aerial height; the broad sheet of iron was fitted in its place, resting on a rim in the staff, on which it played freely, and finally was secured with a nut screwed on to the top. Side by side with it the chamois-hunters planted their green tree, which had a strange appearance, as if growing out of a soil of ice."

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST PAPER.



WHEN Mr. Meadows opened his wife's short manuscript to read it for her, its title did not surprise Harold—

BIBLE FORESTS AND BIBLE MOUNTAINS.

The steps of God are upon the mountains; the voice of God permeates the forests. The greatest events in the world's history are closely connected with its high places and its spreading woods. The law of God thundered from Mount Sinai to influence a world through all its history, and to direct generation after generation of mankind. From a mountain the gentle voice of the Saviour of the world gave forth those wondrous precepts which proclaimed and insured the fuller spiritual development of our race. The life of the first great lawgiver, Moses, as well as that of Him who came to fulfil the law and the prophets, was closely connected with mountains. Moses communed with God on Mount Horeb before he became the instrument in God's hand to deliver his nation from their state of slavery in Egypt. Christ

retired into a mountain to pray, after bestowing blessings on thronging multitudes.

We lose sight of Moses upon Mount Nebo. The "old man eloquent," with an eye that was not dim at a hundred and twenty years old, and a natural force that was not abated; who had just delivered a noble farewell charge to the twelve tribes of Israel, over whom he had been the acknowledged leader for more than forty years, "went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea," which I need not remind you is the Mediterranean, "and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

"And had he not high honour—the hill-side for a pall,
To lie in state while angels wait with stars for tapers tall;
And the dark rock pines like nodding plumes over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand, in that lonely land, to lay him in his grave?"

"And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended."

I was privileged recently to see a very beautiful picture—"Moses on Mount Nebo;" representing this great leader of Israel, this mighty prophet of the Lord, with a far-away look in his fine, penetrating eyes, gazing at the Promised Land, spread out below him, but which his feet might never tread. A noble, majestic figure, full of dignity and command, yet with a meek unconsciousness of both; robed in a long, striped abba of camel's hair, which flowed from his shoulders; standing between the earth and the heavens, just as the door was about to open for him into a fairer "promised land" than any he had dreamed of, from which he should "go out no more for ever."

From a mountain "where Jesus had appointed them" the disciples beheld a "greater than Moses" re-enter the heavens, whence he had come to bless mankind.

"Upon a mountain apart he was transfigured; upon a mountain he died; and from a mountain he ascended to his Father."

What a couple of pathetic mountain pictures we have in these verses—"And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every

man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up."

"And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and *wept over it.*"

David wept for his own troubles; Christ for the woes of others.

And what a mountain story is to be found in the eighteenth chapter of the First Book of Kings!—the uncompromising prophet Elijah alone with God against four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, the great, idolatrous King Ahab, and a crowd of vacillating Israelites who had denied the God of their fathers. On Mount Carmel they gathered; and from Mount Carmel, as from a beacon-hill, has shone through all the centuries the light of the fire which the Almighty kindled in defence of his servant and for the proclamation of his truth.

One purpose animates the great prophet, to convince his countrymen of their sin, and to turn them

to the worship of the living God. "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men." Then by the test of fire that should consume the sacrificed bullock, he challenged the four hundred and fifty priests of the false god to prove the power of Baal.

"And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made." Then with terrible irony "Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them." And when, after all this passion of despair and waiting from morning till the time of evening sacrifice, "there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded," Elijah began his measures. Summoning the people as witnesses, he repaired the altar that was broken down. Then he built an altar with twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Israel; made a deep trench

around it; put wood and the bullock cut in pieces on the wood, and caused four barrels of water to be poured over the whole three times, till there was sufficient to thoroughly saturate the altar and the sacrifice. "He filled the trench also with water." "Then," in answer to his earnest prayer, "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

The very next chapter shows us Elijah living in a cave on Mount Horeb, and records another beautiful and instructive mountain story.

The forests of Lebanon, with their cedar and fir trees, furnished the material for the temple; and the treaty between Hiram, king of Tyre, and the young king at Jerusalem is an interesting forest story. Unfortunately the groves and forests of Palestine were too often the scenes of idolatrous worship; and the God-fearing kings were constantly destroying the groves, that they might do their best to annihilate the heathenish associations they possessed for the people.

"The wood of Ephraim," which "devoured more people than the sword devoured," when the battle went hard against David's rebellious son, Absalom, can never be separated from his tragic death,—the

beautiful young prince caught in the oak by the long bright curls of hair which had been his pride, and killed there by impetuous Joab, "while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak."

Jotham's parable about trees may fitly close my brief essay. I have desired to make it suggestive, that the members of the F. and M. C. may learn the important fact that concerning almost every possible subject which is likely to interest us very deeply, we can find something in the inspired pages of the Holy Scriptures.

"Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem," said Jotham, "that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your

trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

Apart from Jotham's immediate meaning in this parable, there is a fine lesson for all of us, that those who are most useful in their position are generally the most satisfied, and unwilling to take another of doubtful excellence.

"Thank you, mother," said Hal, as Mr. Meadows folded the manuscript and handed it to him. "We must take our annals back to school. 'Twill be fine fun some awfully wet day to invite the seniors and juniors to a lecture. Won't they stare and wonder? that's all."

"And won't they vote us industrious when they see all the writing?" said Joe. "Uncle Fred, what a splendid idea it was of yours!"

"The poetry of the forest and mountain would make a nice subject for an additional essay," said Mrs. Norton.

"Only there would be no story in that, would there, mother?" asked Tom, for whom poetry had very little attraction.

"Indeed there might be," she answered; "some of our greatest poets have sung the praises of forests and mountains. Joe, can you not repeat those lines of Coleridge's to Mont Blanc? The whole poem will be too long, for we must not be late to-night. Begin at that last exquisite passage—"Thou too, hoar Mount!"

Joe, with much feeling and good expression, obeyed :—

“Thou too, hoar Mount ! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene
Into the depths of cloud that veil thy breast,—
Thou too, again, stupendous Mountain ! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base,
Slow travelling, with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
To rise before me,—rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense, from the earth !
Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from earth to heaven,
Great hierarch ! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth with her thousand voices praises God.”

THE END.

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